SPORTS / A24

Clijsters, Hingis to do battle; Blake out

WORLD / A20

US concerned over China silence on missile test

WORLD / A19

Abbe Pierre, French priest who championed the homeless, dies at 94

See winning lotto numbers in Metro, Page A17

Bishop tells bishops: Beware of envelopes

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT'S JANUARY, THE TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) assembles in the first of two closed-door meetings to tackle diocesan concerns and national issues.

Going by the past plenary assemblies held during the Arroyo administration, it's also the

BISHOP/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, January 23, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 46 P18 website: inquirer.net

Most Filipinos think politicos are dishonest

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FILIPINOS DO NOT THINK HIGHLY OF THEIR political leaders.

According to a national survey conducted last November by Asia Research Organization for Gallup International Association, as many as three of five Filipinos believe that their political leaders are "dishonest."

MOST/ A6

GMA urged to stop suspending local officials

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora

GOVERNORS ARE PLANNING TO ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to impose a moratorium on the suspension and dismissal of elected local officials so as "to avoid adding more fire to a highly charged political atmosphere."

Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone said they would make the appeal to the President when the governors meet with her over dinner at Malacañang next week.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said he would also convey to the President the local government officials' concerns over the string of high-profile dismissals and suspensions of mayors and governors.

"We share the concerns of local government officials and we believe that a moratorium is indeed the most prudent thing to do at this time," Defensor said.

The governors are making the call after Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno announced that more mayors and governors facing corruption charges could face dismissal or suspension.

The Ombudsman issued on Jan. 12 dismissal orders against Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas, Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad of Pasay City and Mayor Antonio Esquivel of Jaen, Nueva Ecija, and a suspension order against Gov. Antonio Sanchez of Batangas.

The police assault on the Iloilo provincial capitol on Jan. 17 to evict Tupas drew widespread criticism and accusations of an "overkill."

The assault was stopped after

GMA URGED/ A4

PUNO: More heads will roll

One-armed bandit next

BAND OF BROTHERS

For some officers and men of the Philippine Marines, the fight against the Abu Sayyaf is more than for duty, honor and country. It has also become very personal. This photo was taken in the hinterlands of Basilan in 1993 when the Marines started going after a still unknown enemy. Of the seven men in this photo, only three are still alive, among them then 2nd Lt. Robert Velasco, now a major, and Capt. Juancho Sabban, now a brigadier general. The photo is from Velasco's collection and was furnished to the INQUIRER by Arlyn dela Cruz.

Military targets folk hero Sahiron

A ONE-ARMED SEPTUAGENARIAN who could be the successor to slain Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani has become the next target of the military in its war on terror.

Although already in his 70s, Radullan Sahiron is worshipped as a folk hero in the Abu Sayyaf strongholds in Jolo and Basilan, Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino said yesterday.

"If our troops would get Sahiron, then everything would come to an end," Tolentino, the Army chief, was quoted by Reuters as saying.

"Sahiron is the most respected leader in the Abu Sayyaf. He's the most senior and the most experienced although he lacks foreign contacts."

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. has said that Sahiron "could be the successor" to Janjalani and vowed the military will go after him and other remaining Abu Sayyaf leaders.

Esperon said his troops were girding for what he called "the final battles" with the Abu Sayyaf and claimed the end of the bandit group was near.

"If we get Sahiron, I think everything will crumble," Tolentino told reporters at the weekend.

But an Army intelligence officer, who requested anonymity, expressed doubts that Sahiron would be able to effectively lead the bandit group because of his advanced age, among other things.

"But his counsel would always be sought and would remain an important voice in decision-making," said the officer.

Sahiron's right arm was amputated when it was shattered by a bullet in a firefight when he was still a Moro National Liberation Front fighter in the 1970s.

SAHIRON: Most respected Abu

The military last weekend confirmed Janjalani had died from wounds sustained in a gun battle with troops on Patikul, Jolo, last September.

Last week, the military said it had killed Jainal Antel Sali, alias Abu Sulaiman, the group's tactician and master planner.

Tolentino said the military's top targets were Sahiron and then Dulmatin and Umar Patek, two Indonesian militants blamed for the 2002 Bali bombings who had taken refuge with the Abu Sayyaf in Jolo.

"It would be easier to track down and get the Indonesians if we get Sahiron out of the way," he said. "His subordinates would probably come to us to collect rewards for these Indonesians."

Two other Abu Sayyaf leaders have been mentioned by the military as possible successors to Janjalani.

They are Isnilon Hapilon, who was allegedly involved in the kidnapping of three Americans and 17 mostly Filipino tourists from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan in 2001, and

ONE-ARMED/ A6

US envoy hails AFP success vs Abus

EVEN THE WORLD'S ONLY SUPERPOWER was impressed.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney yesterday congratulated the Armed Forces of the Philippines for its successes in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf and said relations between Manila and Washington were "stronger than ever."

The US tribute followed the killing of Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani and another top leader of the group, Jainal Antel Sali, alias Abu Sulaiman, in clashes with the military.

US President George W. Bush has hailed the Philippines as a major ally in America's war on terror. But ties between the two countries recently suffered a setback after a Makati judge convicted US Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith of raping a Filipino woman and sentenced him to 40 years in prison.

Washington suspended military exercises with Manila after Philippine courts refused to hand Smith over to US Embassy custody while his conviction was on appeal.

When the Arroyo administration, despite the absence of a court order, turned Smith over to the embassy, Washington said it was resuming the war games.

US ENVOY/ A6

DOJ looking for evidence of 'treachery'

LEVISTE: Facing reinvestigation

By Armand N. Nocum and Tarra Quismundo

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez has ordered a reinvestigation of the killing of Rafael de las Alas on Jan. 12 by former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste to find out whether there was "treachery" involved.

Treachery is one of the grounds that would warrant the upgrading of the case filed against Leviste to murder.

The Makati police earlier charged Leviste, the estranged husband of former Sen. Loren B. Legarda, with homicide, allowing him to post bail.

Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco yesterday told reporters that the "reinvestigation of the murder is being undertaken in response to the request of the relatives of the victim."

"We want to look into the case thoroughly ... to see if there is evidence of treachery," he said.

Velasco said prosecutors would examine the autopsy report and ballistics tests conducted by forensic experts. The tests showed that De las Alas may have sustained as many as five bullet wounds.

Gonzalez said last week the "the number of shots fired shows there is evident premeditation (on the part of Leviste) because if you just want to maim somebody without really an intent to kill, you will not fire more than one shot."

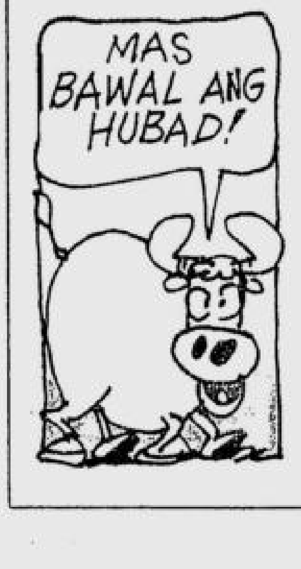
Velasco has asked the Makati court to defer the arraignment of Leviste on the homicide charge pending the reinvestigation.

An arraignment is the act of formally accusing someone of a crime in a court of law, and asking him or her to enter a plea of "guilty" or "not guilty." The act places an accused under the court's jurisdiction and paves the way for a trial.

Court rules provide that once arraigned on an offense lesser than murder, Leviste could no longer be charged with a more se-

DOJ/ A8

Airline bars man wearing 'terrorist Bush' T-shirt


MAS BAWAL ANG HUBAD!

SYDNEY—AN AIRLINE PASSENGER, who was barred from an international flight for wearing a T-shirt depicting US President George W. Bush as a terrorist, yesterday threatened legal action against Australia's flag carrier Qantas.

Allen Jasson, 55, an Australian IT expert who lives in Britain, was stopped from boarding a London-bound Qantas flight at Melbourne Airport on Friday for wearing what the airline said was an offensive T-shirt.

Airline staff said Jasson's T-shirt that carried an image of Bush with the tagline.

AIRLINE/ A4

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will experiance mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/22/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

JBC list of bets to SC down to 5

By Armand N. Nocum

PUNO

THE JUDICIAL AND BAR COUNCIL (JBC) yesterday narrowed down to five its list of nominees to the post of associate justice of the Supreme Court, with Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura and Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo-Castro topping the JBC's shortlist.

The JBC, headed by ex-officio chair Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno, however, frustrated the bid of Government Corporate Counsel Agnes Devanadera to become the high court's 15th member.

Devanadera was earlier seen as a strong contender due to the backing she reportedly enjoyed from the Palace. But she was excluded apparently because Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson accused her of plunder.

During her public interview, retired Sandiganbayan Justice Raoul Victorino, a member of the JBC panel, reminded Devanadera that the council followed a policy of not including in its shortlist any candidate with pending criminal and administrative cases.

In yesterday's voting, the eight-man JBC gave Nachura and De Castro seven votes each.

Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Ruben Reyes, and CA associate justices Portia Aliño Hormachuelos and Roberto Barrios made it to the list after getting five votes each.

Only Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Rep. Simeon Datumanong voted in favor of Devanadera.

Two other slots in the 15-man high court will be vacated this year when two magistrates reach the mandatory retirement age.

The JBC declared vacant the SC associate justice post last Dec. 11, following the appointment of Puno as Chief Justice.

Under the Constitution, the president has 90 days from the occurrence of the vacancy to fill up the position.

The JBC is tasked to receive and screen nominations for all judicial positions, as well as nominations for the posts of ombudsman and deputy ombudsman.

US training RP cops, others vs gas attacks

By Volt Contreras

THE UNITED STATES IS TRAINING PHILIPPINE police, firemen, health workers and other civilian personnel on how to respond to attacks using Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), including chemical, biological and radiological, the US Embassy announced yesterday.

The three-week course is ongoing at the Philippine Public Safety College in Taguig City, sponsored by the US state department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program.

Inviting the media to cover a "field exercise" this Wednesday, the mission underscored the project days after it heaped praise on the host government for eliminating the top leaders of the Abu Sayyaf, a group tagged by Washington as a terrorist organization.

In the course, participants were being taught "how to differentiate WMD incidents from other hazardous materials incidents, how to recognize elements of imminent WMD threat, and (how) to mitigate the impact of these emergencies," the embassy said in a statement.

Upon completion of the training, they should be able to act as "first responders" to the scene of an emergency environment that includes chemical, biological, or radiological contamination, it added.

The scheduled exercise on Jan. 24 at the PPSC will teach participants how to respond to Radioactive Dispersal Devices (RDDs), also known as "dirty bombs."

During the simulation, a team responding to an RDD incident will be shown setting up a decontamination area, don personal protective equipment, and then go into the hazardous area to retrieve "victims" and mitigate the contamination.

The 30 course participants are from the Bureau of Fire Protection/Special Rescue Unit, Philippine National Police (PNP) Special Action Force, PNP Bomb Data Center, Department of Health, Metro Manila Development Authority, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Makati City government, Philippine Coast Guard, PPSC and Office of Civil Defense.

'Third Force' idea gaining ground all around

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL Villar Jr. and three colleagues are leading the push for a "common ticket" of incumbent senators, a move that could spice up the May 14 senatorial polls initially seen as a "proxy war" between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former President Joseph Estrada.

Villar, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, and Senators Ralph Recto and Edgardo Angara are bent on seeing through the formation of this slate, a so-called "third force" and are convincing Senators Panfilo Lacson, Joker Arroyo and Luisa Ejercito, as well as former colleagues, to join them.

The four—who are being wooed by either the administration or the opposition, or both—said they believe that the "unity ticket" would become viable if all seven reelectionist senators agreed to run in the same slate.

"Four have expressed openness to the idea, to move things forward and see if it can be achieved," Pangilinan, chair of the Liberal Party wing of Sen. Franklin Drilon, said in an interview, referring to himself, Villar, Recto and Angara.

Recto predicted that the "third force," if formed, would be a "dominant force" in what could be a bitterly contested senatorial election.

"You're talking here of seven senators who have worked with one another for the last two-and-a-half years and won against Malacañang on key issues," Recto said in an interview.

Yesterday, Villar and Lacson confirmed the ongoing talks among incumbent senators and other winnable candidates to form a common ticket. But Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, who reiterated she wasn't seeking reelection, believed this was a mere "trial balloon."

Villar indicated that the talks were still "fluid" and that nothing had been finalized.

Lacson, for his part, confirmed the talks. "The thrust, as Villar indicated, is to solidify candidates who have the right to run. Now, as to personalities, that will be discussed because there are minor adjustments on whether to accommodate reelectionists (comebacking senators), balikbayans and new faces," he said.

The ticket won't be limited to incumbent senators. If the talks prosper, Representatives Alan Peter Cayetano of the NP and Benigno Aquino III of LP will also be included in the slate, according to Pangilinan.

Former Sen. Loren Legarda yesterday said the emergence of a so-called "third force" during elections was normal in a multiparty system but that she had no plans yet of joining it.

According to political observers in business and government, "a third force" or an alternative choice would benefit the administration more than the opposition because it would divide the anti-Arroyo vote.

"I prefer that the best qualified candidates run under either of the two major slates as third force candidates have traditionally fared very poorly," said Makati Business Club president Ramon del Rosario Jr. in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Raul Lambino, spokesperson of Sigaw ng Bayan, belittled the third force proponents as nothing but "selfish" and "opportunists," or simply *balimbing* (turncoats).

Former Education Secretary Butch Abad, one of the leaders of the Hyatt 10 of ex-Arroyo Cabinet secretaries, explained that the third force was united by "philosophical or ideological" beliefs that the election should be more than a choice between pro-Arroyo and pro-Estrada candidates. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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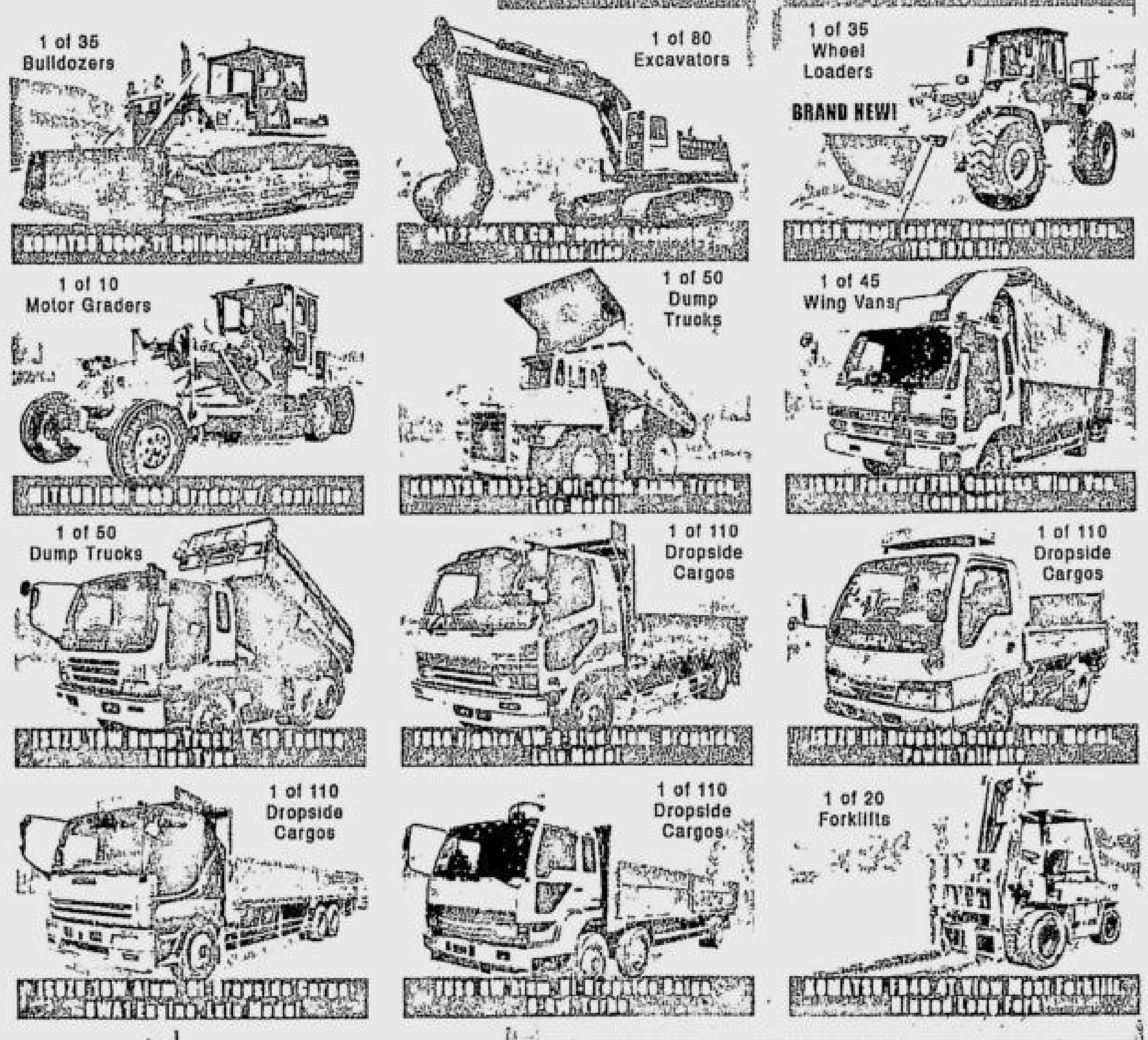

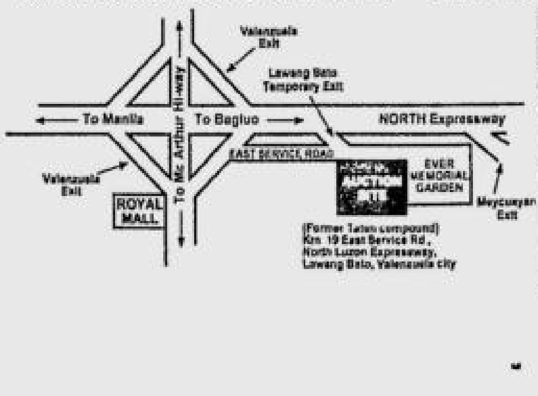

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Fil-Am woman dies in airplane

A FILIPINO-AMERICAN woman died on board a Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight shortly before it landed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) over the weekend.

A PAL official said Rena Billones-Hancock, 70, an American citizen of Filipino descent, succumbed to a heart attack.

"She had a heart attack prior to landing. Her family was there with her during the flight," Rolly Estabillo, head of PAL's communication department, disclosed.

Hancock was a passenger of PAL flight PR 103 from Los Angeles that arrived at the Naia Centennial Terminal at 2 a.m. Saturday.

An airport authority report said that Hancock was about to enter the plane's lavatory when she "slipped, felt dizzy, and became unconscious."

Some 20 minutes later, her daughter, Silveria Hernandez, noticed that Hancock, who had been led back to her seat, was no longer responding "and apparently had no more pulse." *Nikko Dizon*

Pinoys' abduction in Nigeria prompts deployment ban

By Volt Contreras and Christine O. Avendaño

THE ABDUCTION OF SIX FILIPINO seafarers in Nigeria over the weekend has prompted Malacañang to suspend labor deployment to the oil-rich African nation, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

The Philippine government through its ambassador to Nigeria, Masaranga R. Umpa, has also called on the abductors to release the captives immediately, stressing they were there for a legitimate trade and were not engaged in any political activity.

A group called Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend) seized the six Filipinos on Saturday while their German-operated cargo ship was passing near Warri in the Delta State.

Mend has demanded the release of "two prisoners facing treason charges" who are being held by the Nigerian federal government, in exchange for the Filipinos' freedom, according to DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya, quoting a report from Umpa.

The two prisoners facing treason charges are former governor of Bayelsa State, Chief Dietreye Alamieyaseigha, and the leader of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Front, Alhaji Asari-Dokubo.

It was the fifth abduction of Filipino workers recorded in Nigeria since 2006, Malaya said in a briefing.

The previous four incidents involved seven Filipino workers. In the first three cases, the victims were released after being held between five and 11 days. In the fourth incident, the release was secured within 24 hours, Malaya said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the temporary ban on sending Filipinos to Nigeria.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the ban would stay until Nigerian authorities would be able to guarantee the safety of Filipinos in their country.

Following the President's order, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has frozen the deployment of overseas Filipino workers to Nigeria.

"In the light of the repeated incidents of kidnapping of Filipino workers due to the political situation in Nigeria and in order to ensure the continued security and safety of our OFWs, the temporary suspensions of contract processing of deployment of Nigeria-bound workers is hereby ordered," Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said in a memorandum.

Undersecretary for Employment Danilo Cruz said they were having difficulty ascertaining the identities of the kidnapped Filipinos because of scanty data on the incident. There is no Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Nigeria while the Philippine Embassy, which does all labor-related work, is based in the capital Abuja, which is located inland.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian government has begun talks to secure the early release of the six Filipino seamen.

The DFA said the Philippine government was closely coordinating with Nigerian federal and state authorities to free the six sailors.

There were about 3,900 Filipinos in Nigeria at the end of 2006, most of them working in the oil industry. It is one of the biggest employers of Filipinos in Africa. *With reports from Jerome Aning, Nikko Dizon, Reuters, AP, and AFP*

FORMER Sen. Loren Legarda, founder and chair of Luntiang Pilipinas, without a "Brad Pitt," plants a tree on the typhoon-damaged grounds of the Luneta together with (from left) Carlito Fajardo, National Parks Development Committee executive director, and Ludovico Badoy, National Historical Institute executive director. At right is the "real thing," Angelina Jolie.

REM ZAMORA

Loren: I'd rather be Angelina Jolie of RP

By Cynthia D. Balana and Leila B. Salaverria

FORMER SEN. LOREN LEGARDA said she would rather be the "Angelina Jolie of Philippine politics but without a Brad Pitt."

Like Hollywood actress Jolie, Legarda's life, particularly the colorful personal and political aspects of it, is full of surprises and conflicts.

She said the idea of her life being compared with Jolie's was started by a magazine editor and she liked it.

"I'm like Angelina Jolie... but without a Brad Pitt," she said laughing.

Legarda said despite Jolie's busy schedule as an actress, she found time to do humanitarian work as a UN ambassador. This should be emulated by women around the world, she said.

During yesterday's tree-planting ceremony at Luneta Park by her foundation, Luntiang Pilipinas, Legarda spoke of her possible political comeback in the May elections, but stressed she would only do so to do more humanitarian work.

"What I really like is giving books, planting trees, being involved in breast cancer awareness programs, medical missions. But the mudslinging, the overspending, the corruption—I hate those things. I really don't like politics but I like the humanitarian work that goes with it," she said.

Legarda said she would announce her decision whether or not she would run for the Senate on her 47th birthday on Jan. 28, or on her father's birthday on Feb. 12.

She added that she was confident that the issue of her estranged husband, former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste, being involved in the slaying of a former aide, would not affect her chances in the elections.

Legarda also said that while her electoral protest against Vice President Noli de Castro would not be affected if she runs for the Senate, the process has been hard on her emotions and finances.

"My protest is still there. I have not completely made up my mind about running for the Senate although I am inclined to do so because there is strong public clamor," she said later during the day at the Kapihan sa Manila forum. "But I'm still praying over it, assessing the situation and preparing myself for that battle once again."

Legarda said she already spent P12 million to prove that the election returns in Lanao del Sur, one of the pilot provinces identified in her protest, were fake.

She might have to spend P100 million if she pursues her protest.

"I must admit, 2004 was traumatic, emotionally and financially, but in exchange for that, I had the overwhelming love and support of the people," she said.

Should she return to the Senate, Legarda said she plans to introduce legislation that would ensure that electoral protests are resolved in a specific time so that they would be finished before the contested party's term is over.

She also said she would want to pass laws to effect a total log ban in light of the flooding and other calamities that affected the country. She would see to it that existing laws protecting the environment were actually enforced, noting that the Clean Air Act and the Solid Waste Management Act were not being implemented.

Filipinos, Egyptians riot over football

A RIOT APPARENTLY sparked by a football game erupted on Saturday between Filipino and Egyptian workers at an aluminum factory in Dubai, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

Nine Filipinos were hurt while six others were being held by the United Arab Emirates police, the DFA said, quoting from Philippine consulate in Dubai updates.

The incident, actually two separate riots that occurred at around 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Jan. 20, prompted the management of Arabian Aluminum Co. to separate the workers' camps, DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya told the INQUIRER.

The company also pledged to "bail out" the six and provide medical attention to the nine injured, the DFA said.

The six Filipinos had yet to be released by the Dubai police as of this writing, Malaya said. The DFA did not know if the Egyptian workers were also held.

The consulate report said the conflict started when some Egyptian workers playing football hit a Filipino. The Filipino took offense, starting the fight between the two groups."

UAE police arrived to pacify the situation and then left, it said.

"Later that evening, another commotion ensued when a group of Egyptians banged on the doors and broke the windows of the Filipinos' sleeping quarters," the report said. *Volt Contreras and Jerome Aning*

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Bishop tells bishops: Beware of envelopes

From page A1

CRUZ

time Malacañang becomes unusually—and surreptitiously—generous to the country's Roman Catholic bishops.

So before they gather at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila beginning tomorrow, one of their "big brothers" has given out a piece of unsolicited advice.

"I hope my brother bishops and I won't allow our names to be soiled and our integrity questioned by accepting any cash envelopes," Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a former CBCP president, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The Lingayen-Dagupan prelate, at 73 one of the senior members of the CBCP, was referring to incidents in the July 2006 plenary assembly when Malacañang representatives slipped into the center and allegedly distributed cash envelopes to some bishops.

The CBCP was then in the spotlight as the public waited to see if the bishops would support the move to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo for allegedly stealing the vote in the 2004 elections.

In a pastoral letter released after the assembly, the bishops said they were "not inclined at the present moment to favor the impeachment process as the means of establishing the truth."

Anti-Arroyo forces criticized the position, apparently ignoring the concomitant explanation given by the bishops:

"For unless the process and its rules as well as the mind-sets of all participating parties, pro and con, are guided by no other motive than genuine concern for the common good, impeachment will once again serve as an unproductive political exercise, dismaying every citizen, and deepening the citizen's negative perception of politicians, left, right and center."

Known for corruption

Cruz yesterday admitted that the envelope distribution last July created among the faithful "a perception definitely not favorable to the bishops."

He said much was expected from the CBCP considering that the Arroyo administration was "known for graft and corruption."

"The CBCP should at least show an example of honesty and integrity," he said.

Last July, at least two bishops told the INQUIRER that they had been offered cash envelopes during the CBCP plenary assembly.

But Dipolog Bishop Jose Manguiran and another prelate assigned in a poor diocese said they had both rejected the offers. They later identified the generous hands as Fatima Valdes, Ms Arroyo's undersecretary for religious affairs, and an assistant.

'Shameless'

"Garapal (shameless)," was how the 70-year-old Manguiran described the alleged Malacañang attempt. "They were trying to bribe the bishops."

Manguiran said the two envelopes slipped into his hands soon after he was approached by Valdes each contained 15,000 cash.

He said he promptly asked Fr. Juanito Figura, CBCP assistant secretary general, to immediately return the envelopes to Malacañang, along with his letter rejecting the offer. He said he kept a copy of the letter for reference.

"I don't accept that kind of money," Manguiran said. "We shouldn't be teaching the people to be beggars. If they could do that to bishops, then they could do that to the common people."

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Atty. Liwayway Vinzons-Chato – BIR Commissioner (1993 – 1998). She is the first female and second longest serving BIR Commissioner. Currently managing partner of Chato Vinzons-Chato Law Offices.

Atty. Nelson M. Aspe, CPA – BIR Regional Director, Region #8 covering the cities of Makati, Taguig, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas & Muntinlupa (2006 – present). He is also a BIR, MCLE, and CPE lecturer on internal revenue and other selected tax matters.

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SENATE VISITORS Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. with wife Myrna, daughter Nielette and son Iloilo Board member Niel Tupas Jr., listen as Sen. Franklin M. Drilon denounces on Monday the police assault on the Iloilo capitol as "another example of the Arroyo administration's widely known callousness and complete disregard for human rights." ROGER MARGALLO

GMA urged to stop suspending ...

DRILON assails the government for the assault on the Iloilo capitol Monday. ROGER MARGALLO

From page A1

Tupas obtained a temporary restraining order from the Court of Appeals.

Tupas was ordered dismissed by the Ombudsman for two cases of malversation of public funds involving relatively small amounts—one for P20,000 and the other for P65,000.

A considerable number of graft cases against local executives is up for resolution by the Ombudsman, according to Assistant Prosecutor Marina Demeterio.

Demeterio said last week that sanctions on local officials relating to allegations of graft were not covered by the prohibition on certain acts during the election period as mandated by the Election Code.

Bad timing

"We want to appeal to the DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government) and the Ombudsman to enforce a moratorium on LGUs (local government units) until after the elections," Singson said.

"If there are indeed cases facing these local officials, they could go after them after the polls. They should have done this long before the campaign season. I believe it's bad timing that they should do it now when the elections are so near," Singson said.

Evardone said he expected the political atmosphere to heat up in the run-up to the May 14 polls.

The series of dismissals and suspensions were causing fear and anxiety, according to the governor.

"We must ease the tension on the political front and avoid possible conflagration as we enter the campaign season," Evardone said.

Emotional factor

Defensor said the DILG and the Ombudsman should be sensitive to the feelings of the local officials' constituents.

"The law is the law but we should also take into consideration the emotional factor. And we all know that people's emotions always run high during elections because of the intense partisanship," he said.

Puno has asked the Ombudsman for a list of elected local officials with graft cases that are already up for resolution.

Take cases seriously

He said he would urge the local executives—governors and mayors, among them—to seriously attend to their cases or face dismissal and suspension if the Ombudsman decided against them.

"Some local officials tend to take their cases lightly, only to be startled when the Ombudsman rules against them," Puno said.

"Instead of defying orders from a competent authority by resorting to disruptive behavior it would be better for them to seek recourse before the proper courts," Puno said of the local executives.

Puno said that if the Ombudsman finally ruled on the cases and issued dismissal or suspension orders, the DILG would implement the orders.

"We at the DILG will be guilty of dereliction of duty if we do not obey these orders from the Office of the Ombudsman," Puno said.

Complaint against Puno

This developed as a lawyer filed a complaint against Puno in the Office of the Ombudsman for his violation of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Government Officials and Employees.

Lawyer Oliver Lozano said he was filing the complaint because it was Puno who allegedly "masterminded" the assault on the Iloilo capitol.

"Consequently, innocent and helpless civilians were unnecessarily intimidated with the use of Armalites, glass walls were unnecessarily smashed and excessive military force was employed," Lozano said.

"Puno knowingly did not preempt the violent assault," he said.

Lozano said cases of grave coercion and malicious mischief should be filed by Tupas and his supporters.

Unlike coercion and mischief, violations of the code of conduct may be filed by any individual, he said.

Puno dismissed Lozano's complaint as nothing more than a publicity stunt.

Airline bars man ...

From page A1

"World's Number One Terrorist" could have upset other passengers.

Airline staff demanded that Jasson change his controversial T-shirt but he refused.

Jasson, who had earlier traveled on a Qantas domestic flight wearing the same T-shirt, said Qantas had denied him freedom of speech.

The irate passenger said he was seeking legal advice on how to challenge the airline's policy and recover costs involved in missing his flight.

"To be fair to Qantas, they said I can take another flight if I don't wear the T-shirt, but I am not prepared to go without the T-shirt," Jasson said.

"I might forfeit the fare (about US$2,000), but I have made up my mind that I would rather stand up for the principle of free speech," he added.

A Qantas spokesperson defended the airline's policy and stood by its staff's decision to stop Jasson from boarding the flight to London.

"Whether made verbally or [printed] on a T-shirt, comments with the potential to offend other customers or threaten the security of a Qantas group aircraft will not be tolerated," the spokesperson said. *Reports from AFP and Reuters*

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 19 ISSUE, an I-Team Report on the front page—"Rafael has problems Thomas Edison, Tom Cruise, Whoopi Goldberg had"—misspelled the name of a nonstock, nonprofit school for children afflicted with dyslexia in the country. The name of the school is Wordlab—not Worldlab—School Inc.

* * *

IN LATER EDITIONS OF THE Jan. 21 issue, a front-page article—"Mama always cooked 'tinola' for her 'bunso'"—carried a subhead that erroneously described the late Khadaffy Janjalani as the "Youngest of 6." Janjalani was the youngest of five siblings.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 22 ISSUE, an I-Team Report on the front page—"Growing up with Gabe"—misstated the birth year of Gabriel "Gabe" Formoso III. He was born in May 1986—not 1985.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a story on Page A2—"GMA draws some heckling at concert"—misstated the name of the group of multinational singers that performed at the Philippine International Convention Center recently. The name of the group is Il Divo—not El Divo.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

Palace pushes pay hike; Senate coming around

By Michelle V. Remo and TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG HAS URGED Congress to pass a proposed bill granting a pay hike to all government workers this year.

Under the proposal, soldiers and policemen would get an additional P1,200 monthly allowance, while other state employees would be granted a 10-percent increase in their base pay.

Officials said the Palace's request, which comes four months before the May elections, was reasonable given the improved financial situation of the government, which has trimmed the budget deficit by a significant margin.

"When we embarked on our mission to put our fiscal house in order, we asked government workers to toil with us. Now that we have turned the corner, the comprehensive pay increase once foregone can no longer be postponed," Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said in a statement.

Department of Budget and Management representatives personally came to the House of Representatives yesterday to submit the proposed bill, which Malacañang considers to be a priority.

Andaya said the Arroyo administration was targeting the implementation of the pay hike by July.

The budget chief estimated that the proposed hike would cost the government P10.3 billion, an amount he considered huge but which the civil servants had long deserved, he said.

Of the amount, P8.2 billion will go to the non-uniformed government workers, while the remaining P2.1 billion will be for policemen and soldiers.

There are an estimated 839,757 civilian and 282,349 uniformed personnel who would benefit from the pay increase.

The budget allocated for the increase in the allowance of uniformed personnel—composed mainly of policemen and soldiers but who also include coast and jail guards—would translate to a raise in their daily allowance from P60 to P90 and to a 100-percent rise in their hazard pay from P120 to P240 a month.

Andaya said the pay hike for state workers would be the second installment of a three-part series to increase government pay.

The first one was the P1,000 a month across-the-board hike granted to government employees in January 2006.

The government plans another pay hike round of "substantial" amounts after this one.

After seeing the wisdom of implementing it, the Senate labor committee yesterday announced it was adopting the House measure providing for a P125 across-the-board daily wage increase for employees in the private sector spread over three years.

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WORKERS belonging to the Partido ng Manggagawa rallied at the Senate yesterday demanding a P125 wage increase.

ROGER MARGALLO

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, January 23, 2007
3rd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	**Heb 10:1-10**
Gospel:	**Mark 3:31-35**

Jesus' mother and brothers came. As they stood outside, they sent someone to call him. The crowd sitting around Jesus told him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." He replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"

And looking around at those who sat there he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me."

Commentary

What God wants of us is what Jesus gave God—his body and his obedience. Like Jesus, we must answer to God and say, "I have come to do your will." We are one in the Body of Christ, offered to the Father in the Spirit (liturgy) and this is our daily offering—our life lived in obedience to the Word. We belong to, and live in, and are the Body of Christ. Jesus is told that his family waits for him outside—they will not come in, but send word to him to come out. But he does not. He looks around at all of us his disciples and tells us that we are his mother, brothers, and sisters and that blood ties of the new covenant are found in obedience to the will and the Word of God. This is the new family, the new offering and the new worship of God.

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U.P. Batch '66 sets reunion

UPSILONIANS BATCH '66 OF DILIman and Los Baños are invited to rock with Elvis Presley, Trini Lopez and Boy Camara on Jan. 25 at RJ Bistro on Jupiter Street, Makati City.

All night dancing and fellowship will start at 6 p.m. Come in blue jeans and white shirt. Admission is free.

"Food is free, too," said Francisco B. Aniag, the new president of Upsilon Sigma Phi alumni association of the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

Enjoy the music of the '60s with the Moonstrucks and featured Upsilonian performers such as Dr. Manny Tan (Trini Lopez) and lawyer Manny Topacio (Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis). They will be accompanied by the Batch '66 Retro Band composed of lawyer Andy Sta. Maria, businessman Dodie Lagman, broadcaster Angelo Castro Jr. and ex-Cabinet secretary Lenny de Jesus.

'Bill lowering med prices harmful'

IN ITS PRESENT FORM, SENATE Bill No. 2263, which seeks to lower the price of medicine by amending the Intellectual Property Code, could open the floodgates to fake drugs.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, may do more harm than good to Filipinos, according to a statement sent yesterday to the INQUIRER by the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP).

"We believe that it is in the interest of the country that SB 2263's proposed amendments should not be passed in its current form. While the objective is praise-worthy and worth pursuing, the specific amendments, however, that were developed to attain the objective are beset with loopholes ... [It] is lacking in sufficient safeguards and other measures protective of public health. [Its] proposed amendments may possibly become detrimental to the very thing that they seek to protect—the public health," the PHAP said.

"Not only will SB 2263 weaken intellectual property rights protection, it may lead to problems ensuring the quality, efficacy and safety of drugs and medicines that may be sold in the Philippines," it added.

SB 2263 has a counterpart bill in the House of Representatives, House Bill 6035, which was submitted to the House Committee on Trade and Industry chaired by Rep. Junie Cua.

The PHAP presented a position paper on both bills outlining its concerns. In particular, the group has asked lawmakers to study, clarify and refine the proposal adopting "international exhaustion" and "parallel importation."

Under the international exhaustion regime, once a product has been introduced anywhere in the world by the patent owner, anyone may buy and import the product for resale in the Philippines without risk of patent infringement. This will allow the parallel importation of medicines so that anyone, whether a trader or an individual, can shop outside the Philippines for lower prices.

This, however, will not necessarily lead to lower prices of medicines.

"Studies show that little of the lower price is passed on to the patient," the PHAP said.

The group stressed that "parallel imports without proper monitoring can create health risks for consumers, as the handling and storage of the medicines cannot be guaranteed to be safe."

The PHAP also noted that the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) and the Department of Health (DOH) do not have sufficient resources to ensure the safety, efficacy and quality of parallel imports.

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Military sharpens tactics in fighting Abu Sayyaf

By Arlyn dela Cruz

AFTER YEARS OF BEING BLOODied by the Abu Sayyaf, the Philippine military has fine-tuned its strategy and tactics for defeating the country's fiercest bandit group.

Where before soldiers went into battle in battalions, now they move in small clusters, like the enemy, according to a military officer familiar with the operation.

"In 1993, we moved in big numbers and we attacked and attacked because we thought that they were like the Moro National Liberation Front fighters of the 1970s and 1980s, who moved in large numbers," Maj. Robert Velasco, head of the Marine Recon Company, told this reporter.

"But we were surprised because they (the Abu Sayyaf) were different, they knew guerrilla tactics and they could slip away in small groups," said Velasco, speaking in Filipino.

Velasco was a second lieutenant in 1993 when he and his men from the 1st Marine Brigade were ordered to attack a camp of the Abu Sayyaf in Upper Kapayawan in the mountainous area of Isabela, Basilan.

Their specific mission was to rescue two hostages: 4-year-old Anthony "Ton-Ton" Biel, grandson of transport magnate Luis Biel Sr., and Claretian priest Bernardo Blanco.

The mission was a success. They recovered the boy while Blanco escaped from his captors during the fighting.

Velasco said the change in military tactics of pursuing specially targeted Abu Sayyaf personalities was developed with strong human intelligence, or HUMINT, gathered from the local community and previous Abu Sayyaf hostage victims.

Velasco also noted that as early as 1993, the Abu Sayyaf were already using high-powered and sophisticated firearms.

Recalling those days, Velasco said that he even managed to inject humor in the midst of fighting that sometimes lasted for many hours.

"*Halos walang pahinga ang putukan na ako na nga sumisigaw na, tulog muna tayo, puwede office hours lang ang labanan?* (There was almost no respite in the shooting and I was even shouting, 'Let's all get some sleep. Can we not fight only during office hours'?)"

Marines with a long history of battling the Abu Sayyaf found a common pattern in the way their targets moved. They would go around in small numbers, discreet, and at specific times during the day and night.

"They were like the NPA (New People's Army), sometimes fisherman, sometimes trader, sometimes farmer ... They do not carry their firearms at all times. That's why it's difficult to corner them," Velasco said.

Thus was born Oplan Tidal Wave, prepared by Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban, which called for an intelligence buildup and special operations involving the movement of troops in small but scattered groups.

"*Hindi humihinto, pero salitan, walang puwang na mabakante at ang ipinuwesto sa harapan yung mga* highly trained and heavily equipped troops," Velasco said.

An important element of Oplan Tidal Wave is the infusion of simultaneous development projects in the communities that were once influenced by the Abu Sayyaf.

Aside from support training, the US Armed Forces was giving other assistance, Velasco said.

Most of the projects built with the assistance of the US government were constructed in Patikul and Indanan, two of the known Abu Sayyaf strongholds in Sulu.

"We have finally known the enemy and knowing the enemy tells us that the enemy is not men or leaders like Khadaffy Janjalani. The real enemy here is ideology and the existing social conditions that contribute to the acceptability and growth of that ideology," Velasco said.

One-armed bandit Sahiron next target

From page A1

Abu Pula, believed to be in his 50s.

Sulaiman was deadlier

Esperon doubts that the Abu Sayyaf can find a leader as strong as Janjalani or Sulaiman, who were recently slain in separate encounters with government troops in Sulu.

"We do not see any viable leadership that could provide the same kind of leadership," Esperon said.

For his part, AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said: "It will be easy for them to put somebody at the helm of the ASG (Abu Sayyaf Group) but ... they would have difficulty looking for somebody in the caliber of Abu Sulaiman."

Even Esperon had said that Sulaiman ranked higher than Janjalani in the military's order of battle since he masterminded terrorist acts.

High-value targets

The military has vowed to press its hunt for the bandits under its so-called "Oplan Ultimatum" that was launched last Aug. 1.

"The instruction of the chief of staff is to really go after the high-value targets. The objective of Oplan Ultimatum is to get the high-value targets, meaning we will go after these three (Sahiron, Hapilon and Abu Pula) and other subcommanders of the Abu Sayyaf," Bacarro said.

Troops who have been hot on the trail of the Abu Sayyaf will get due recognition, Bacarro said.

Police in Metro Manila have been placed on "heightened alert" to thwart any Abu Sayyaf retaliatory attacks, according to Chief Supt. Eric Javier, deputy chief of operations for the National Capital Region Police Office.

"This is to prevent any desperate move based on developments in Mindanao," Javier told reporters.

"Heightened alert" means 75 percent of the 15,000 policemen in Metro Manila will have to cancel their leaves and stay at their posts at all times.

The military has placed its troops on nationwide "red" alert, meaning all leaves are canceled. *With reports from Dona Pazz-ibugan, Alcuin Papa, PDI Research and Reuters*

US envoy lauds AFP for successful drive vs Abus

From page A1

"These people are on the FBI's most wanted list. They have killed Filipinos, Americans," Kenney was quoted by the Agence France-Presse as saying, apparently referring to Janjalani and Sulaiman.

"I feel very strongly that we must congratulate the Armed Forces of the Philippines. They are dedicated and doing a wonderful job of keeping the people safe," she said.

The United States had offered bounties of up to $5 million each for the capture of Janjalani and Sulaiman.

Americans victims, too

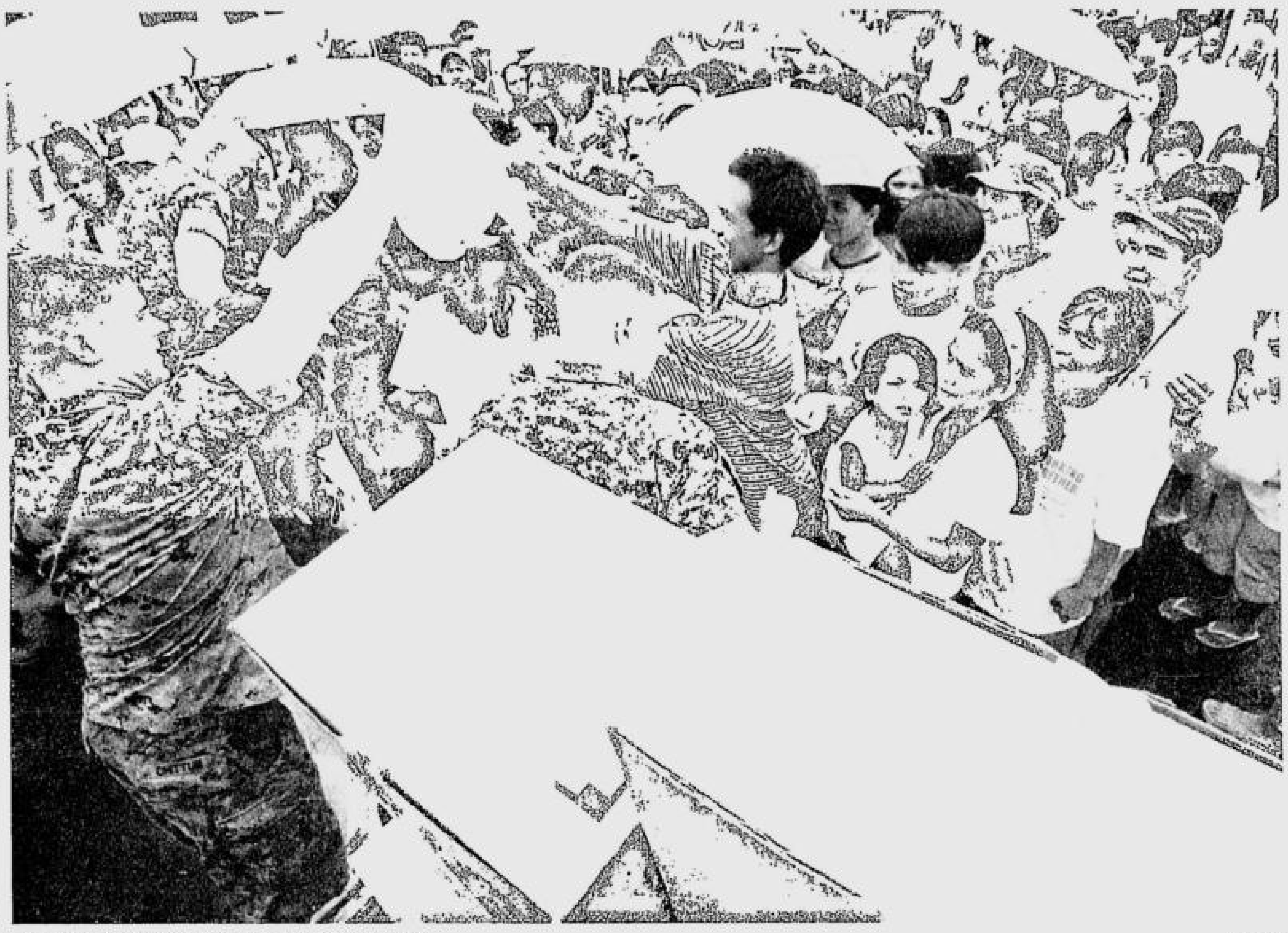
Janjalani was killed in a clash with government forces in Patikul, Sulu, last September but confirmation of his death came only last weekend after DNA tests conducted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Americans have been victims of Abu Sayyaf atrocities. American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham and tourist Guillermo Sobero were among dozens of people kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf in 2001.

The bandits later beheaded Sobero, while Burnham was killed during a Philippine military operation in which Gracia was rescued.

Crucial year

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that "special incentives" were awaiting military forces assigned to track down the Abu Sayyaf in Jolo and Basilan.



US SOLDIERS distribute goods in Legazpi City.

REUTERS

Ermita also said he expected the US government to be true to its word and release the rewards it had promised for informants whose tips led to the killing of Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman.

In a statement, President Macapagal-Arroyo said 2007 "will be a watershed for national security as we mop up the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao and continue to blunt the tactical edge of the New People's Army."

She said her administration would combine military strategy, good governance, people support and regional and global alliances to defeat terrorism and the insurgency.

Referring to the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Ms Arroyo said one of her aims was "cutting off the tentacles of the NPA that impose revolutionary taxes on the people and campaign taxes on candidates for the polls."

All-out war no solution

Lawmakers urged the government to include in its final war plan against the Abu Sayyaf a comprehensive strategy to protect and safeguard the rights of noncombatants.

Rep. Risa Hontiveros of Akbayan stressed that an all-out war was not the solution to terrorism.

She called for a "national peace policy framework" that would uphold human rights and warned that even the passage of the antiterror bill would only exacerbate the peace and order situation in the war-torn areas.

Representatives Eduardo Veloso of Leyte and Eladio Jala of Bohol pushed for forced evacuation of civilians in battle zones, saying they might be used as human shields by the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf.

Veloso said such a dangerous scenario could happen as the remaining Abu Sayyaf terrorists would be more desperate to fight for their survival.

'Prepare for the worst'

"If the remaining terrorists are allowed to gather forces this time, we should expect a more dangerous group, hence government forces should be prepared for the worst," Veloso said.

"Certainly we don't want civilians to become casualties of this raging war. Thus, we should ensure their safety and protection."

Jala said the danger that local residents might be caught in the crossfire was "high."

"We've seen this scenario before and it's not remote that it could happen again as the terrorists would fight back with ferocity," Jala said. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac and AFP*

Most Filipinos think politicos are dishonest

From page A1

Close to three of five Filipinos also said in the face-to-face survey that political leaders "have too much power and responsibility."

About half of the 1,000 respondents at least 18 years old said political leaders "behaved unethically" and were "too sensitive to public opinion."

More than half of the respondents also said their leaders "responded to pressure from people more powerful than themselves."

Only three of 10 said that their leaders were not capable of doing their jobs or were incompetent.

Business leaders

On the other hand, Filipinos have a higher regard for business leaders.

The survey showed that only three of 10 Filipinos, or 30 percent, believed that business leaders were "dishonest," "behaved unethically" and were "sensitive to public opinion."

About two of five respondents, however, felt that business leaders had "too much power and responsibility" and "responded to pressure from people more powerful than themselves."

The Philippine results reflected the views of respondents in other countries included in the Gallup International Voice of the People (VOP) survey, which showed a growing lack of confidence in their leaders' ability to improve their people's lives.

The global survey carried out for the World Economic Forum (WEF) represented the views of 1.5 billion citizens, and the findings would be part of the discussions in this week's annual meeting of the WEF in Davos, Switzerland, on "Shaping the Global Agenda—The Shifting Power Equation."

Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the WEF is an independent organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders to discuss issues of global concern.

Growing pessimism

Gallup International said in a statement that the VOP survey showed there was growing pessimism that the next generation would live in a safer and more economically prosperous world.

The survey showed that 48 percent of the 55,000 respondents in 60 countries believed that the next generation would live in a less safe world. Only 26 percent saw a safer world, and 20 percent saw no change happening.

Western Europe came out the most pessimistic region, with 68 percent of the respondents there saying the next generation would live in a less safe world, followed by those in the Americas at 59 percent.

On the question of whether the next generation would live in greater economic prosperity, the survey showed that two of five respondents felt that future generations would be economically better off, compared to 31 percent who saw a little and a lot less prosperity.

Western Europe again emerged the most pessimistic region with less than one of five respondents feeling the world would be more prosperous for the next generation, and over half seeing a lot less prosperity.

Asia more optimistic

Asia, on the other hand, was much more optimistic with more than half of respondents there thinking that the next generation would live in a lot or a little more economically prosperous world, compared to just 23 percent believing the opposite.

Philippines Results

A national sample of 1,000 respondents, aged 18+, was interviewed in a face-to-face survey by Asia Research Organization at the end of November 2006.

Question: Here are some things that people have said about political leaders/business leaders. Which of these do you think apply?

	Political leaders	Business leaders
They are dishonest.	62%	22%
They have too much power and responsibility.	58%	41%
They behave unethically.	47%	31%
They are too sensitive to public opinion.	52%	33%
They respond to pressure from people more powerful than themselves.	56%	58%
They are not capable and competent	29%	26%
Don't know/Not applicable	1%	6%

SOURCE: GALLUP INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

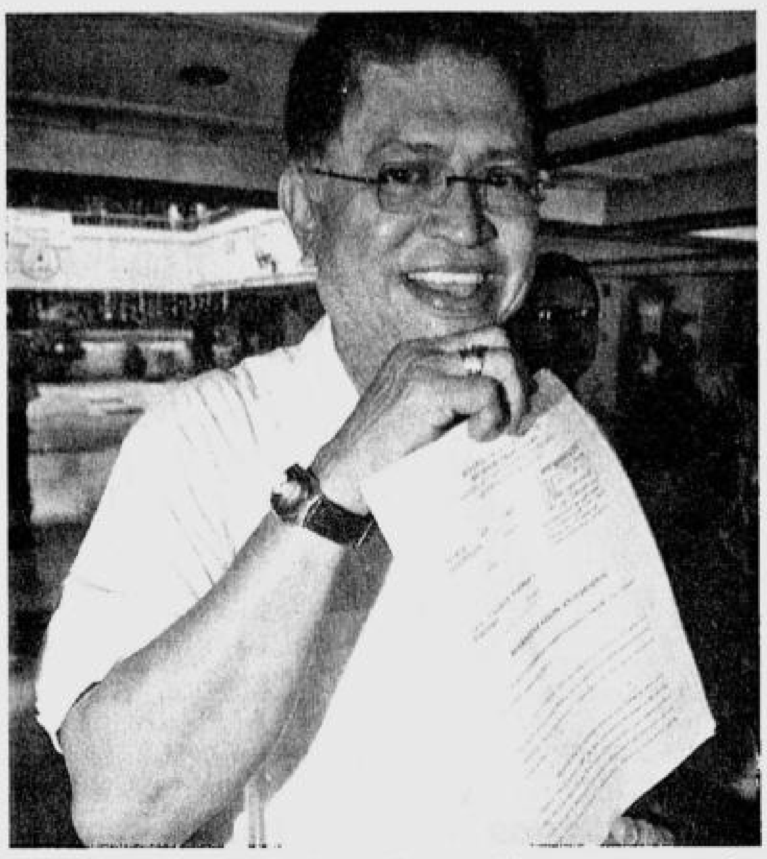
Just like in the Philippines, respondents in other countries rated business leaders more positively than their counterparts in politics, with more than two of five citizens describing their political leaders as "dishonest," "unethical" and having "too much power."

Africans were the most critical of their politicians, followed by the East Europeans and people in the Americas, led by those in Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.

Over half of US citizens interviewed also thought their politicians were dishonest.

Asked what business and political leaders should focus their attention on, the VOP 2006 survey indicated that the leaders should work to reduce wars (15 percent), eliminate poverty (13 percent), economic growth (12 percent), stop the war on terror (12 percent) and close the gap between the rich and poor (11 percent).

And for leaders to regain their constituents' trust, citizens said in the survey that they should be more transparent and exercise better governance (32 percent) and that fraudulent behavior should be punished (30 percent).



ABRA Gov. Vicente Valera shows off a copy of the postponement of his arraignment over illegal possession of firearms charges by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court. Valera was alleged to be the mastermind in the slaying of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. and his bodyguard last Dec. 16. RAFFY LERMA

Suspect's turnaround didn't surprise Valera

By DJ Yap

THE LAWYER OF ABRA GOV. Vicente Valera said he was not surprised that former Army M/Sgt. Rufino Panday retracted his statement declaring the governor was the brains behind the murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr.

"Even in the beginning, we knew Panday was not a credible witness," lawyer Jose Grapilon said yesterday after a court hearing.

"[Valera] did not know him from Adam, and there's evidence that [Panday] was not even there when the murder happened," he told reporters.

Grapilon, however, said the retraction did not have any bearing on Valera's cases, including several counts of illegal possession of firearms and explosives pending in two different courts.

He also denied allegations by police that Valera had put up a P5-million fund for favorable media coverage. "That's absolutely unbelievable... The governor knows the media cannot be bought," he said.

Valera declined to answer questions from reporters. When asked how he was, he would only say: "I'm OK. I'm OK."

He was supposed to be arraigned yesterday on weapons possession charges before Judge Tita Marilyn Villordon of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 224, but the hearing was postponed.

Villordon reset the arraignment to Feb. 26 to give the prosecutors time to file their motion to admit amended information.

Valera's counsel also indicated their intention to submit a comment on the prosecutors' motion for a hold-departure order against their client, which is pending before the court.

Grapilon said Valera would also file a motion to quash the case once the other motions were resolved.

The prosecutors wanted to change a typographical error in the case information, which said Valera was arrested at 2 p.m. on Dec. 29. He was actually arrested at 2 a.m.

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The Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) Opposes Proposed Wage Increase

The Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) is a professional organization of over 1,200 corporations/human resource practitioners, apart from 18 chapters nationwide.

Throughout its 50-year existence, PMAP has endeavored to address, among other things, employment concerns, such as the determination of fair wages, through solutions that are mutually acceptable to both workers and employers.

Consistent with the foregoing role, PMAP strongly opposes the across-the-board wage increase proposed by Senate Bill No. 2030 and House Bill No. 125.

In our informed opinion, a legislated wage increase is -

1. **Unrealistic.** It does not take into consideration the differences in the cost of living, business environment and capacity for employment generation among regions. It likewise discounts wage differences among industries, as some businesses are unavoidably less profitable than others.
2. **Oppressive.** It burdens employers with additional obligations, without concurrently setting-up an environment that is conducive to productivity. Since jobs and employment benefits can come only from business success, the gain achieved by employees from a legislated wage increase will only be short-lived if there are not enough business profits to sustain it.
3. **Indulgent.** It instills a culture of entitlement in the minds of workers, causing them to insist on higher benefits without necessarily working for the same.
4. **Unfavorable to Labor.** Increased employment costs will constrain employers to reduce their workforce through retrenchment, resulting in greater unemployment. This also makes the feared casualization of workers more attractive to employers, thereby creating a greater threat to employee security of tenure.
5. **Unfair.** A legislated wage increase will only benefit workers in the formal sector. Without increased wages, the more numerous workers in the informal sector will be without means to combat increased prices of goods due to increased production costs.
6. **Burdensome.** The enforcement of a legislated wage increase will be a challenge to the State. The filing alone of complaints based on *perceived* violations of the wage increase will unnecessarily drain the State's resources.
7. **Inconsistent with National Interest.** The clamor for the immediate enforcement of a wage increase will likely lead to concerted action, and accordingly, to a highly unstable labor environment. This discourages investments in the country to the disadvantage of the national economy.

PMAP is of the strong opinion that the system now in place is sufficient to address the demand of workers for higher wages, without disregarding the interests of employers.

Our present system is –

1. **Realistic and Flexible.** The NWPC and the Regional Wage Boards created by R.A. 6727 already provide a flexible framework for the determination of living wages, taking into account regional and industry differences.
2. **Founded on the basic principles of democracy.** Free collective bargaining and negotiation instills a culture based on merit rather than entitlement among workers, and rewards higher productivity with higher wages. Through collective bargaining, workers are not reduced to being "production costs" but become active partners of their companies.

Instead of imposing an across the board wage increase, PMAP strongly recommends that the State focus on developing an environment that is conducive to business and economic growth. While a legislated wage increase will accomplish only short-term goals, a healthier and more productive business environment provides the material for lasting employee benefits.

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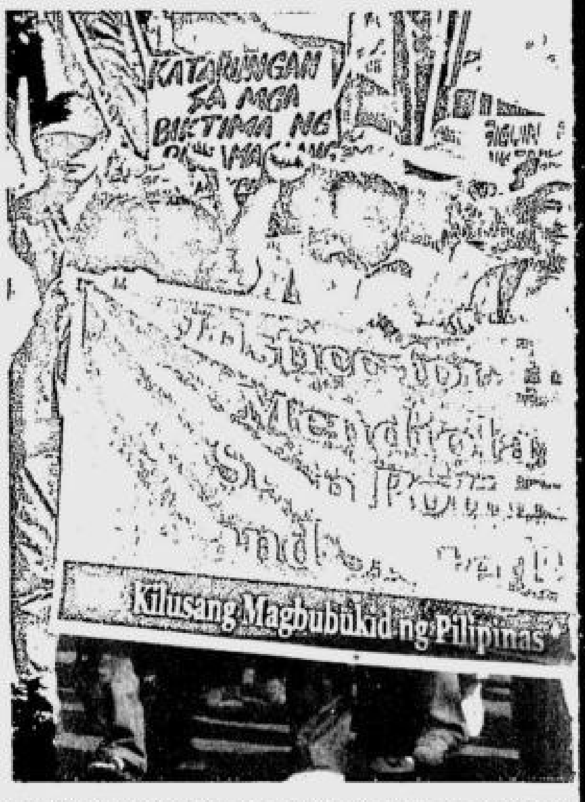
(PDI-Jan 23, 2007)

Mendiola massacre, 20 years after

PEASANT leader Jaime Tadeo locks arms with other sectoral heads, among them Etta Rosales, now a party-list representative, in a huge rally in Mendiola during the term of President Corazon Aquino. RAMON ACASIO

RALLYISTS, composed mostly of farmers, run for safety as police fire at their ranks during a rally in Mendiola. RAMON ACASIO



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Loren visits killed by her

By Cynthia D. Balana

FORMER SEN. LOREN LEGARDA last week visited the wake of Rafael de las Alas, who was shot dead on Jan. 12 by her estranged husband, former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste, at the LPL Tower in Makati City.

At a press conference yesterday after she led the ceremonial planting of 500 trees by her Luntiang Pilipinas Foundation at Rizal Park, Legarda asked the media not to put political color to her visit.

She said that De las Alas' daughter, Tina, was a former member of her staff in ABS-CBN when she was still a television broadcaster.

LEGARDA: I c
Christian, dec
being.

"Of course, if someone loses a loved one, you condole with him or her," Legarda said when asked why she went to the wake but did not visit Leviste when he was confined at a hospital short-

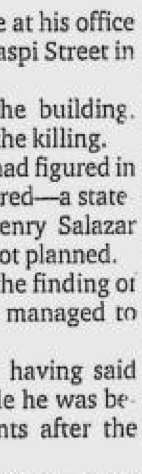
DOJ looking f

From page A1

rious offense.

Contending that the case is murder, the De las Alas family is expected to move for the deferment of Leviste's arraignment at the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 scheduled for tomorrow morning.

"We're seeking the deferment because we are asking that the evidence be reexamined, because it is our submission that, based on the evidence at hand, it is murder," said the family's lawyer, Joven Lorenzo.



GONZALEZ

Self-defense

Claiming self-defense, Leviste had confessed to shooting his longtime aide at his office on the ninth floor of LPL Tower on Legaspi Street in Makati City.

The former governor who owns the building made the confession three hours after the killing.

One witness told police that the two had figured in a heated argument before shots were fired—a statement on which inquest Prosecutor Henry Salazar based his ruling that the shooting was not planned.

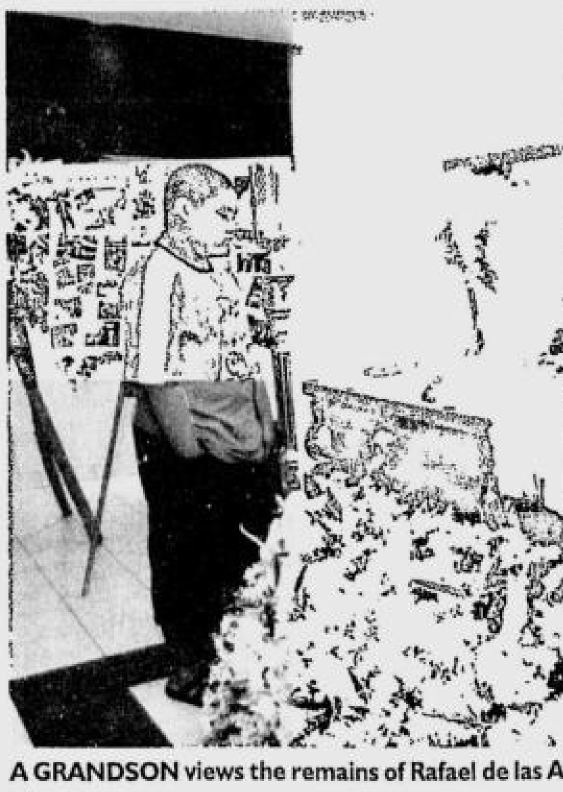
The prosecutor also gave weight to the finding of an investigation that De las Alas had managed to pull his 9mm during the incident.

Another witness quoted Leviste as having said that "that man tried to shoot me" while he was being assisted out of his office moments after the shooting.

Leviste himself has never spoken directly about the shooting.

Leviste was subsequently admitted to the Makati Medical Center for hypertension. He was later allowed temporary liberty by the Makati court after he posted bail of P40,000.

He stayed at the hospital when he was "under arrest



A GRANDSON views the remains of Rafael de las Al

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ilusang Enero 22 · Anakpawis

ants yesterday demanded justice for the 13
n a hail of bullets fired by government forces. The 13
porters who massed at Mendiola on Jan. 22, 1987 to
and reform. REUTERS

A PROTESTER risks his life to help a wounded colleague and remains defiant through it all. RAMON ACASIO

MEMBERS of the police force fire at rallyists composed of farmers at Mendiola. RAMON ACASIO

vake of man ex-husband

id it as a
ent human

ly after the shooting.

"I did it as a Christian, decent human being. I believe that I did the right thing that is fair and just. I'm just being true to myself," she said.

Legarda refused to comment on the culpability of Leviste, saying she has nothing to do with the case as she is estranged from Leviste.

She acknowledged though that what happened was tragic and sad not only for her two sons with Leviste and Leviste's family, but also for the De las Alas family.

She said that De las Alas' wife embraced her at the wake and told her that family members did not expect her to come because they were just ordinary people.

Asked if Leviste was a violent person, Legarda said she would rather not talk about it and just let the details of the case unfold in court.

or evidence ...

Leviste's lawyer, Henry Capela, said his client was "still under medication and strict supervision of his doctors."

Subpoena

The Department of Justice yesterday issued subpoenas to Leviste; Voltaire Pascual Nulud, medico-legal officer of the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory at the Southern Police District; Ruel Lasala, National Bureau of Investigation chief; and the Makati chief of police.

In his "subpoena duces tecum," Velasco asked those summoned to appear at the justice department for a reinvestigation hearing at 2 p.m. on Jan. 31 "in the interest of the effective administration of the criminal justice system."

Capela said he had "no immediate reaction" to the family's move to defer the arraignment of his client.

He assured the family that should the arraignment push through, Leviste would be in court.

"He'll be there. He would not hide and he's willing to face the music," the lawyer said.

Reinvestigate or reevaluate

In calling for the resetting of the arraignment, Lorenzo said the family would cite its request for the justice department to reinvestigate or reevaluate the case.

Only after the justice department finished the review could proceedings in the lower court proceed.

Lorenzo said a reinvestigation would involve having the parties submit new evidence, while a reevaluation or reexamination would serve as a second look at available evidence to determine whether the city prosecutor handled the case correctly.

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EDITORIAL

SOME THINGS MAY CHANGE IN THE ELECTIONS in May, but one thing will remain the same: members of political dynasties will figure prominently in the major races. Political clans have many advantages over the "ordinary" candidates: they have money, influence, media exposure and name recall.

Some commentators have expressed disgust over what they call the emerging "family club" in the Senate, where children and other relatives of senators will run for seats in that chamber. JV Ejercito is reportedly angling for the Senate. If he is elected, there will be two Estradas/Ejercitos in the Senate, just like now.

Allan Peter Cayetano is reported to be set on joining his sister Pia in the Senate. And Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III is planning to run for senator. Last November his father, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. said that following the non-passage of measures that would ban political dynasties, he and his son Koko might as well start their own version of a family reign. "We supported the bill to prohibit political dynasties but it didn't even get to first base, " he said. And so Pimentel is giving up the struggle. Then the Pimentels will be in familiar company: among them, the Osmeñas, Marcoses, Estradas, Aquinos, Biazons, Escuderos, Arroyos, Binays and Atienzas, to name a few.

Article II, Section 26 of the Constitution says that "[t]he State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law." Several measures have been filed, but none has gone beyond first reading, mainly because of disagreements over what a political dynasty is. Among these measures were those filed by the late Laguna Rep. Magdaleno Palacol and Palawan Rep. Alfredo Abueg.

And so political dynasties will grow stronger and become better entrenched in national and local politics, and Congress and the local governments will increasingly become their exclusive domain.

Eric Gutierrez remarked on this phenomenon in his landmark study, "The Ties that Bind," that he made in 1994 for the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and the Institute for Popular Democracy. He noted that more than two-thirds of the members of the House come from families that have held public office and maintained political influence for at least one generation.

"An entrenched oligarchy makes it difficult for newcomers and deserving candidates from the less privileged sectors to break into mainstream politics," Gutierrez said. "Further, the growth of program-oriented and community-based political parties is seriously impaired when elections are reduced to contests between families rather than issues."

The political clans' control of economic resources and exercise of political influence make it easier for them to win elections and perpetuate themselves in power. Thus we see the other phenomenon of political office being passed on from the incumbent to son or daughter or sibling or spouse. Public office has become personal property that can be passed on from one person to his or her relative.

The members of the political clans are contented with the present state of affairs for they get to enjoy political and economic power almost in perpetuity. The members of Congress cannot be expected to exercise political will to pass a measure that would ban political dynasties; they've never had it so good. Jose Abueva, political scientist and former president of the University of the Philippines, said that they do not have the political will to effect change "because they regard politics and government as a family enterprise and use their office and connections to enhance their personal interests."

Because of the phenomenon of political dynasties, many political scientists say the Philippines is an oligarchy where only a few people or a few clans rule. And with these political clans zealously guarding and promoting their interests, there is little hope that they would ever support legislation or push executive initiatives that would benefit the greater mass of the people.

The 1987 Constitution, to correct the rule of the elites, provided for party-list representatives. But their number is so small that they cannot significantly influence the direction of legislation in the House. One solution may be to increase the number of party-list representatives. The ideal solution is the enactment of a law that would ban political dynasties. But as of now, it remains a pipe dream. It is an issue that is best addressed by a constitutional convention in the future.

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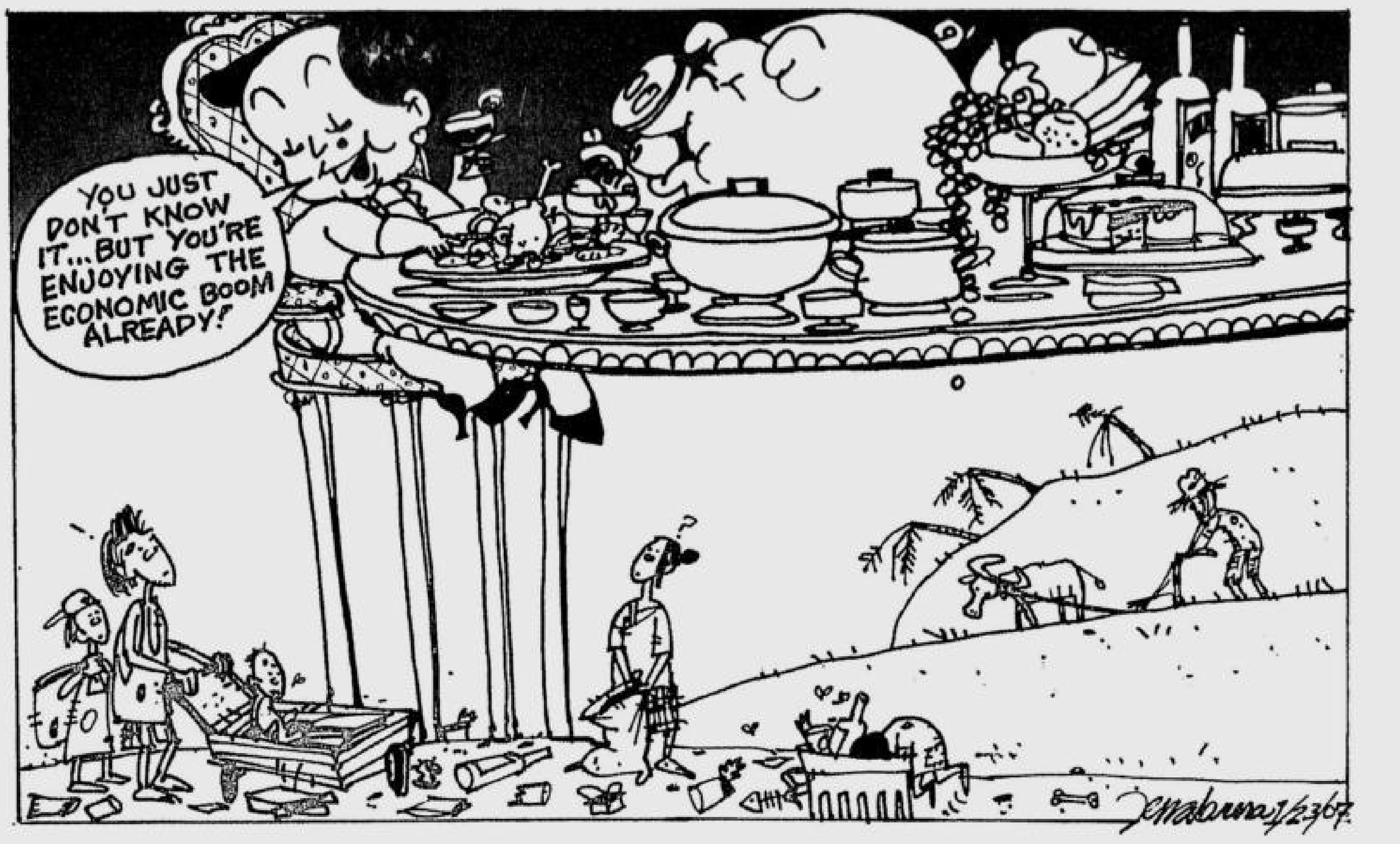
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Making a cat dance

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"IF THERE'S GOLD IN THE HOUSE, THERE'LL be money scales outside." This Chinese proverb captures what's roiling the notorious coconut levy within the Presidential Commission on Good Government's house.

With scant notice, PCGG commissioners "approved a resolution that will allow the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) to use accumulated dividends from its 27 percent stake in San Miguel Corp.," the INQUIRER reports. The resolution doesn't state "where the funds are to be used."

Is this a blank check for P1.9 billion worth of dividends that have piled up? If so, this would be just the loose change. The capital is in 14 holding companies with six oil mills. These were bought with levies extorted from small coconut farmers under martial law. The dictator and cronies then were building for themselves "a throne of bayonets"—and trying to sit on it.

The coco levy is blood money, bilked from thousands of coconut farmers between 1973 to 1982. Many farmers have gone to their graves without getting back a centavo extorted from them. More than other trust funds, its disposition deserves full candor.

"Transparency in government decision making and public policy implementation reduces uncertainty," the Asian Development Bank notes. Informing citizens fully about government decisions "can help inhibit corruption. It complements and reinforces predictability" which is essential for good government.

Transparency, however, has never been the strong suit of parties in power. This regime is no exception. In fact, the proportion between the degree of clarity and size of the loot (over P100 billion in the coco levy) is inverse.

Thus, the PCGG chose to zipper its lips. Didn't the commissioners learn from tangling with the Senate over their suppressing information on negotiating compromises on the Marcoses' ill-gotten wealth? The Supreme Court horsewhipped the PCGG then for the unconstitutional lack of openness.

"You can't make a cat sit on a hot stove twice." Filipinos have been badly singed by secrecy-shrouded corruption that emptied trust funds. Remember World War II Japanese reparations? This, too, was blood money. A permanent trust fund could conserve the principal and allow the use of the interest only, it was proposed then. But the piranhas got there first.

The P11 billion allocated by the Armed Forces Modernization Act (RA 7898) vanished without a trace, leaving soldiers with worn-out boots, tin helmets and rusty guns. The Feliciano Commission documented the gutting of soldiers' retirement fund by generals. And former Agriculture Underscretary "Joc-joc" Bolante still hasn't accounted for the P728-million fertilizer fund.

Hence, skepticism has met Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura scrambling to justify siphoning blood money held in trust into a blank check. Use the cash "within the CIIF framework," the administration's lawyer suggests. Where are the safeguards?

This dodge is not even original. In January 2005, Presidential Spokesman Ignacio Bunye lofted a trial balloon to peddle 27 percent of SMC shares. "The Sandiganbayan decision should further strengthen our fiscal position," he said.

Bunye anchored his proposal on the anti-graft court's decision shredding the claim of Eduardo Cojuangco and other Marcos cronies that coco levies used to snap up SMC and United Coconut Planters Bank shares were personal funds. Justices Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, Diosdado Peralta and Francisco Villaruz ruled that the cronies failed to prove that levies "became legitimately (their) private funds. "

Instead, the court ordered that the SMC shares, plus 72 percent of UCPB's stocks, be "reconveyed" to government. "It's high time that coconut farmers, who contributed to it, and the entire industry, be given a chance to reap the benefits due them," Castro wrote.

Like the PCGG commissioners, Bunye glossed over details like how proceeds from a fire sale of SMC stocks would be used. Like Bunye, the solicitor general and PCCG officials are skittish about how dividend proceeds would be spent.

Fierce flak brought down Bunye's proposal. But dipping into the multi-billion peso levy has the proverbial cat's nine lives. The idea has been recycled into a formal PCGG resolution. For now, it covers only dividends. But tomorrow, will that sweep in the 27 percent stocks ? "*Pag may salapi tangan / Pusa ma'y napapasayaw,*" a Filipino saying goes. When one has money, he can make even a cat dance.

The frenzy to use blood money will intensify with the elections. Politics will smother the reasonable argument that the levy, long frozen by crony claims, now be put to wise use. Forgotten, too, will be earlier proposals for its use.

What was stolen from farmers must be returned. That was one proposal. After all, the penal code and the commandment "Thou shalt not steal" have not been repealed. Then, there's the "Zacchaeus precedent." The tax collector Zacchaeus pledged before the Master to return four-fold of what he swiped. Restitution is owed those injured by theft.

Another proposal is to rehabilitate an industry pummeled into sunset status by the massive plunder of unrepentant cronies.

These reforms require firm hands. "*Las armas y el dinero requieren buen manejo* (Guns and money require good hands)," Mexicans say. But this is no longer the PCGG of that tough reformer, Haydee Yorac. The present dispensation still has to show it has the needed "good hands" to ward off the "money scales waiting outside."

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The greatest

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I CAUGHT THE ALI-FOREMAN FIGHT AGAIN on ESPN late last Thursday night, which made me sleep late again, but it was worth it. That fight in October 1974 in Zaire, billed "The Rumble in the Jungle," is my absolute favorite. I like it even better than the "Thrilla in Manila," which took place a year later.

I can still remember the air of electricity generated by the Ali-Foreman fight in this country. Ali had become very popular by then and had legions of diehard fans here. I was one of them. I am not a betting man and have never betted money on fights. (I've betted life and limb only on causes, but that's another story.) But I kept telling friends that if I were to put my money on that fight, I'd put it on Foreman. I loved Ali, but, alas, Foreman was just going to kill him.

Foreman was the Mike Tyson of his time. Frazier, who had beaten Ali during his comeback, hadn't just lost to Foreman, he had been pulverized. I saw the fight, and I swear Frazier lifted up an inch or two as Foreman caught him with an upper hook, which sent him to dreamland. I hoped for the best and feared for the worst. The best being that Ali would be floored instantly, the worst being that he would be maimed permanently. As it turned out, that was what Ali's people were thinking, too, as the documentaries revealed. They very literally feared for his life.

I won't go into the fight but urge the reader instead to look it up with that background in mind. You can imagine the frenzy that followed its result. It was Edsa I and II combined, with the breathtaking ecstasy coming from the future downfall of this government thrown in. For Ali did not only do the improbable, which was to win the fight, he did the impossible, which was to knock out Foreman. Hercules could not have done a more Herculean deed. For days afterward, the jeepneys I took home during late nights reeked of alcohol and resonated with loud conversations about the fight. It also echoed with lamentations from people who lost big from betting on the *llamado*.

The fight was shown on ESPN because it was Ali's 65th birthday last week. One he had wanted to celebrate quietly but which the world would not let him. For good reason: Ali is more than a boxer, he is a freedom fighter. His arena isn't the ring, it is the world. He isn't just a sports hero, he is a hero in the epic sense of the word. As observers have observed, he doesn't belong to the company of Joe Louis, he belongs to the company of Nelson Mandela.

Looking back, incredible as Ali's triumph was over Foreman, it wasn't the most incredible. For Foreman wasn't Ali's greatest challenge, the one foe that loomed invincible, that threatened to crush anyone and anything in his path. Nor was it Sonny Liston, the ex-con whom you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley and whose brute strength made him the most fearsome fighter a decade before Foreman. Ali's greatest enemy was the US government.

Or more specifically the Racist and Imperial America that that government represented. The martial law babies will probably not be able to fully appreciate it, but it's almost mind-boggling how Ali defied the draft during the Vietnam War in the 1960s. He was at the height of his career and stood to lose everything by it. He stood to lose his title, his money and his fame. Far more than that, he stood to earn the revulsion, the spite and the condemnation of the country he lived in.

And did: He was stripped of his title, he fell into penury, settling for what little he could lecturing in colleges, his erstwhile friends disappearing faster than his bank deposits, and he became one of the most hated men in America. To this day, even his kids are astonished that he lived to be 65—and metamorphosed from pariah to icon, from leper to legend. Ali was far more hated than Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and they killed King and Kennedy. Yet for the strangest reason (Ali always claimed Allah was his shield), no one lifted a murderous hand against him.

Why did he refuse to go to war? Because, as he put it: "Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home, and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No, I am not going 10,000 miles from home to murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end."

Later, he would add, "No Vietcong ever called me a nigger." Somehow that seemed more poetic than saying, "Healer, heal thyself."

Those words take on particular resonance today in light of what George W. Bush is doing to America. Except that there is no Ali to say: Why should I go 10,000 miles from home to free a people when right here in the home of the free and brave freedom is being extirpated everywhere and bravery replaced by fearful acquiescence?

No, Foreman was not Ali's greatest enemy, and much as I delight watching that fight again and again, I revel even more running in my mind again and again Ali's even greater fight against Lyndon B. Johnson's and Richard Nixon's America. Ali didn't do the rope-a-dope there, he just slugged it out toe to toe, armed with the fists of conviction and the fury of belief. And showed the world that he couldn't just land a flurry of punches on his opponents, he could also take a haymaker—and remain standing.

Ali won that fight, in more ways than one. Richard Harris would sum it up beautifully: Other fighters would have given up their souls to gain the championship of the world, Ali gave up being champion of the world to gain his soul.

The greatest? You bet he is.

Machine gun mounted in Iloilo Capitol?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE SO-CALLED ILOILO CAPITOL RAID IS BEING denounced even by allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo in Region VI as an unwarranted use of force to enforce the Ombudsman's order dismissing Gov. Niel Tupas for graft and corruption—a case filed by Msgr. Meliton Oso of the Iloilo Graft Watch. And indeed there seems to be that aspect. The dismissal order, however, raises many other issues. One problem is that even if the investigation of this case was begun during the term of Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, the ouster order from Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez came on the eve of the start of the official campaign period, which gave it some political color right away. Why couldn't it have been issued weeks earlier to make it credible? Then, too, it's always tough in this country to evict sitting local officials, no matter if the order is correct. There'll always be complaints of political harassment and the official and his followers will barricade themselves and give law enforcers a rough time. The example of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay is too recent to forget. Will we ever see the time when local officials would just step down and fight an ouster or suspension order in court, where it ought to be fought? Quite obviously, the police need special skills in handling such obstructionism, pretty much like a hostage situation demanding similar skills.

* * *

But equally upsetting and very serious and calling for an investigation is the complaint of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez before the Iloilo media, that shadowy intervention came into the picture. He claimed that a C-130 Air Force plane was used to fly to Iloilo classmates at the Philippine Military Academy of the son of the beleaguered governor. (The younger Tupas retired as captain and is currently mayor of Iloilo's Barutac Viejo. Gonzalez has written Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes, Air Force commanding general, to investigate this matter.)

He also alleged that elements of the Guardian Brotherhood, under ousted Cebu customs collector Billy Bibit, were there to support Tupas and that prisoners were released in the guise of attending seminars. He also cited reports that a machine gun was mounted on top of the canopy of the Capitol where Tupas had holed up and that firearms were smuggled through "secret" passages in the Capitol.

Gonzalez's allegations, of course, could be suspect since he is considered as the leader of the Iloilo political faction opposing that of Sen. Franklin Drilon and Tupas, and a showdown between the two factions is expected in May. But his allegations ought to be investigated as they are very serious and reveal one side of the controversy that has not been given full play by the media.

* * *

Cecile Alvarez and I did a broadcast for our dzRH Sunday program on the sights and sounds of the historic 12th Asean Summit in Cebu. We followed this up with interviews of Foreign Undersecretary Linda Basilio, the senior official directly involved in the preparations for the Summit, and Amb. Marciano Paynor, secretary general of the Summit national organizing committee. Basilio recounted the various levels of interaction within the government, from the lowest up to the level of Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and the President, as well as with their foreign counterparts. She explained how the various documents discussed and signed at the Asean and East Asia Summits were hammered out at these levels. She said that putting together all the talking points and documents involved painstaking work over several weeks. She considers as the "high point of the accords" the Asean Convention on Counter-Terrorism signed by the 10 Asean leaders. As the President explained it in her chairperson's statement, the convention was signed "to enhance the region's capacity to confront terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and to deepen counter-terrorism cooperation among our law enforcement and other relevant authorities."

Interestingly, however, the Philippines, Asean's chair until August, still has no Anti-Terrorism Law, owing to the failure of the Senate to still pass it. But the country was able to somewhat counter this with the AFP's successful engagement with the Abu Sayyaf in recent weeks, culminating in the confirmation of the death of its chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani.

* * *

Basilio also recounted the long weeks of negotiations between the committees of various Asean countries on the Asean Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. She said the negotiations proved tough as some Asean countries are suppliers of migrant labor while other countries are recipients. Each side sought to protect its constituents' rights, but all were conscious of the Asean vision of building, as GMA put it, "a just, humane and democratic Asean Community." The DFA official recounted with a laugh how the RP committee would "bracket" controversial provisions during the negotiations, but in the end everyone was happy.

Another important development for RP, she said, was the agreement to recognize regionwide the training our nurses receive in local schools. I noted that given such trust, our schools ought to ensure that their training is always of high standard and that the board exams are free of cheating unlike what happened last year.

* * *

Basilio stressed that the foreign delegations were all praise for the preparations. Afterward they were asking how they could possibly top it. She said the cultural presentation at the gala dinner, for instance, drew such raves that the Singaporeans, who'll host the 13th Summit later this year, said it would be a tough act to follow. Other delegates suggested that Singapore just "import" the dancers from RP.

Basilio also said Singaporean Prime Minister Lee praised GMA for chairing the discussions in a "very professional and businesslike manner." GMA should take that as a compliment.

Tempest before the festival

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WITH A LITTLE OVER A MONTH TO GO BEFORE the staging of Baguio's biggest tourism draw, the Panagbenga or Flower Festival, the local business community, especially the owners of establishments along the city's main thoroughfare, Session Road, are up in arms over plans for this year's festival and how these were made.

Specifically, the Session Road proprietors, who have banded together into the Association of Session Road Establishments, are protesting the imposition of guidelines, formulated by the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Baguio (HRAB), of which only three members have outlets on Session Road. The HRAB has been appointed by the Baguio Flower Festival Foundation Inc. to oversee the conduct of "Session Road in Bloom," a feature of the festival in which the road is closed to vehicular traffic to make way initially for a showcase of flowering plants and other greenery but which has over the years degenerated into a bazaar or *tiangge* in which a hodge-podge of goods are sold.

For the past 11 years, said Edna Anton, owner of Sizzling Plate, a steak house along Session Road, food and other establishments along Session Road have been allowed to use their sidewalk frontage to serve customers during the week-long festival. This was to make up for the slack created by the closure of the road to traffic. But for this year's 12th edition of the Panagbenga, she said, the organizers "want to conduct and experiment obviously to favor business interests outside Session Road, and detrimental to the interests not only of the Session Road businessmen, but also of the public in general."

THE HRAB's plans call for the setting up of stalls, including food stalls, on both sides of the center island of Session Road, with the unoccupied portion of the road used for "various competitions and entertainment activities" and leaving the sidewalks "for pedestrians' use."

In a letter to acting Baguio Mayor Reinaldo Bautista and the city council, Anton, together with other Session Road business folk, pointed out that "to allow food stalls during the event does not make Session Road bloom and poses unfair competition to the restaurants permanently doing business along Session Road." The letter also points out that allowing food stalls on the street would be contrary to the city's sanitation ordinances, not having "comfort room facilities," and with no access to running water nor for garbage disposal.

The Session Road business people likewise protest the manner in which the guidelines were handed down, with no consultation done with the people most affected by them, despite the organizers' claim that the Festival would be "community-based."

In the letter, Anton complained that "we were not consulted and, when we protested, our voices were summarily disregarded." The Session Road group said they would be willing to comply with the guidelines used for the last 11 years, but if they are ignored, then they request the City council "to just keep Session Road open from Feb. 26-March 4, inasmuch as closing the road will definitely and adversely affect our businesses."

* * *

THE DISPUTE between the Session Road proprietors and the organizing committee, represented by the HRAB, has made it to the headlines of most Baguio newspapers.

In one news report, HRAB chair Anthony de Leon admitted that no consultation was done before the guidelines were formulated, but said the basis for the "innovations" they were introducing were feedback gathered from the public as well as members of HRAB who also do business on Session Road.

In a letter to the protesting Session Road business folk, the HRAB counsel said the new guidelines were meant to ensure that "Session Road in Bloom" was staged "in a methodical and presentable manner giving emphasis on the enjoyment, safety and comfort of the general public that will come to Session Road either to enjoy the event, to transact their usual business or to merely enjoy a walk through this sacred road of the City."

The group's "final offer," said lawyer Abelardo Estrada, was that it would give Session Road establishments, regardless of line of business, priority in renting space in the middle of the road fronting their respective establishments and participating establishments would be given a 10 percent discount on space rental, provided that they pass through the screening committee.

In response, the Session Road proprietors reiterate their appeal to the committee to reconsider the guidelines, but offered the following compromise: They would use only half their sidewalk frontage, as suggested by a city councilor; that they would pay only half of the fees collected since the city would be earning income from the rental of frontages across the street; that the businesses allowed to lease stalls directly across the street should not be in direct competition with the affected establishment.

* * *

FROM THE POINT of view of this outsider, this seems a reasonable compromise, a "win-win" solution to an issue that has cropped up so close to the staging of an annual event that has drawn national and even international attention to Baguio.

It need not have reached this stage if, from the start, the city government and the festival organizers had sought to consult with everyone involved, especially the affected establishments. After all, it's not just the tourism industry, and the hotel and restaurant establishments, that are affected by the annual staging of the "Panagbenga." The expected influx of tourists and visitors places a huge strain on the resources of the city, and if Baguio is to justify this burden, it better make sure everyone benefits equally.

The Not-So-United Nations

WORLD VIEW

Richard N. Haass

THE GOOD NEWS FOR BAN KI-MOON IS THAT HE has become secretary general of the United Nations at a time when the prospects for conflict between or among the world's great powers—the United States, China, Japan, Russia, Europe and India—are remote. The bad news is that the prospects for just about every other sort of conflict are high and the international agenda is both crowded and demanding.

Ban needs to begin with a cold, hard assessment of his new position. A secretary general of the UN is more secretary than general. He cannot command. It is not the same as being a president or a CEO. He possesses more influence than power.

Moreover, power at the UN is divided, not simply between the Security Council and the General Assembly, but more fundamentally between the 192 members and the UN itself. The UN is comprised of sovereign states, but it is not sovereign itself and cannot act as if it were.

More than anything else, the UN reflects the ability of the major powers (above all, the United States, China, Russia, France and the United Kingdom, the five permanent, veto-wielding members of the Security Council) to agree—and to back up their agreements with resources. When they are willing and able to do so, the UN can make a difference; when they are not, the UN can act in only the most limited way, if at all, regardless of what the secretary general wants.

Consider Darfur. The world has largely stood by in the face of genocide. This is not a failure of the UN or the secretary general so much as a reflection of the reality that the major powers are divided. China clings to a notion of sovereignty that allows governments freedom of action within their borders. In today's world, such an unconditional definition of sovereignty is inadequate.

But the reality is that no amount of time spent negotiating in New York will turn things around. What matters are the instructions sent to China's UN ambassador from Beijing. In this case, Ban needs to spend time in China's capital, making the case for the notion that governments have a responsibility to protect their citizens, and that when they fail to do so (as Sudan's government clearly is), they forfeit some of the advantages that normally are associated with sovereignty.

Ban cannot simply reform the Security Council to reflect better the realities of this era. But he can make the case that countries such as Japan, India, Germany and others deserve an enhanced position in the UN's most important body, one more commensurate with their power and status. Again, what is holding the UN back is not the UN itself, but its leading members, who cannot agree on what change is needed.

Ban can also make the case that there is no justification in today's world for terror, defined here as the intentional harming of civilians for political purposes. Not just governments, but religious and other leaders need to be persuaded to denounce terror, shaming and de-legitimizing those who carry it out. The secretary general is positioned to make this point loudly and repeatedly.

Two other areas exist where practical changes are both achievable and desirable. Ban should support the creation of an international facility that would provide governments access to (but not physical control of) enriched uranium and plutonium for the generation of electrical power. Such an innovation would help stem the spread of nuclear materials and weapons, while also contributing to a shift away from use of oil and gas, thereby reducing global warming in the process.

The other area is peacekeeping. Establishing a large, standing international force under the UN's control is not feasible and may not be optimal. But providing incentives for governments to maintain such forces at a high level of alert and setting standards for equipment, training and professionalism is something the UN can and should do.

All these suggestions highlight what might be any secretary general's most important asset: his voice. What Ban chooses to say, and how and where he says it, can enhance his influence. Over time, enhanced influence will enable him to get more things done.

All this will be especially important now given the status of the US, the most powerful country in the world, but one with an often uneasy relationship with the UN. Opinion polls indicate a good deal of support among the American public for the UN. But there is also intense distrust of the UN among segments of the public and with certain elites.

Here again, Ban would be well advised to leave New York and spend more time in the capital and around the country. The US needs and benefits from effective multilateralism in a global world, one in which challenges cannot be met by any single country acting by itself. The US has a particular need for effective international cooperation now, when it is stretched militarily, economically, and politically owing to its policies toward Iraq and Afghanistan. Contributing to the emergence of a more productive relationship between the world's most important international organization and its most powerful member would be no small feat.

Project Syndicate

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Broken

YOUNG BLOOD

Josh Bersales

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

TITO REGGIE WAS MY MOM'S BROTHER. WAS BECAUSE he's dead. Deceased. No longer is. Relocated from the present tense to the past.

He lived half of his 44 years in misery, and spent the last nine years of his life in prison for a crime he did not commit. Ironic, my mom used to say. And when I'd look up as if waiting for an answer, she'd explain how my Tito did so many bad things but was never caught, not even once. But in a strange twist of fate, he was accused and jailed for the one crime that wasn't his. What a way to repay one's sins.

I heard little about him all throughout the nine years he stayed in that little prison in Laguna—only that he was not getting any younger, and that his wife never, not even once, attended any of his hearings to offer much needed support such as a wife should give.

I don't know for sure if any of his daughters visited him while he was in jail, although days after his death, I heard another cousin say that his daughter Tin, who was working in Dubai at that time, would surely be heartbroken by his death. But then again, what kind of daughter wouldn't? Nevertheless, I wasn't able to ask Tin whether it was real or plain fiction. I only saw her once during the wake and I didn't really make an effort to ask if she often thought of my Tito while she was out of the country.

Tito didn't die in prison. Which was a good thing, in my opinion, because there is nothing worse than dying inside a cold, little cell, all alone, deprived of the affection every human being needs. He got out of jail early in 2006, courtesy of a raffle draw during a congressman's birthday in their district. His prize: freedom. Little did he know that it would be short-lived, for just months later, he would die helpless inside a small bathroom in a house in Marikina City.

My Mom took him in after his release from prison and immediately arranged to help him get back to normal life, whatever "normal" meant for him. His wife had long refused to see him, and had even kicked him out of her parents' house when he came for a visit. At least his youngest daughter called my sister on the cell phone so she could talk to my Tito for a few minutes.

We tried our best to cheer him up by teaching him how to play Hangaroo and Who Wants to be a Millionaire on our old laptop, and for a while he seemed to get better. We could see him smile and sometimes he would help clean the house or talk to our neighbors. Perhaps, we thought, perhaps there's still hope for him.

Then he went to the province to start a new business my Mom had suggested to him. He was gone for two to three weeks, while in the city, we went back to our ordinary lives, as if an uncle who had wasted nine years in prison hadn't spent weeks sleeping in our little living room at night.

There was a noticeable change in him when he returned from Laguna, or so my mom said. I was too busy with work and my personal life that time to notice any difference in my Tito Reggie. I was only relieved to see him back because that meant that I'd have supper ready when I got home from the office. Mean as it sounded, I never really tried to get close to him, except for our occasional conversations, since I was too preoccupied with my own little concerns. Had I known he would die a few days later, I would have tried harder to get to know him. But then again, regrets always come in the end.

I have heard my Mom recount the circumstances surrounding my Tito Reggie's death to friends and relatives so often that I can now recite the details effortlessly. The night before he died, he was very happy because he was able to free the nasty kangaroo in the game of Hangaroo and my sister was able to win the $1,000,000 jackpot in Who Wants to be a Millionaire. Then he told my Mom that he was going to bed early because he expected the next day to be a long one. My mom had asked him to help in our little business and he was officially starting work the following day.

The next morning, I went down from my room at around 7 and headed straight for the bathroom, only to find out that it was locked. My Tito's slippers were outside the door. Thinking he'd be finished in a few minutes, I went to the kitchen and started preparing my breakfast, thinking that if I couldn't take a shower in the next 15 minutes, I would definitely be late for work.

My Mom came down at 7:30, and I whined that Tito was taking such a long time in the bathroom. Her sleepy face instantly became alert. She hurried to the bathroom and started knocking at the door. Getting no response, she instructed me to peek into the window to check if he was all right.

Normally I'd glare at her for even thinking of making me do something like that, but that morning, I sensed the great urgency in her voice. I quickly grabbed the nearest chair and peeked into our small bathroom. I saw no one.

For a few seconds, we stood there puzzled about where my Tito could be. Mom kept knocking, even as a cold knot slowly formed in my stomach.

Having no other male in the house, Mom ran to our nearest neighbor and asked him to break down the door. With every kick of our neighbor against the old wooden door, the knot in my stomach became tighter and tighter, until I was almost sure he was dead even before I heard my Mom scream her brother's name.

What happened next is too blurry for me to remember. I just found myself sitting beside my Mom in the emergency room of the nearest hospital, trying my best not to let the tears flow from my very uncooperative eyes.

"Be strong, be strong," I kept yelling at myself, "your mom needs you to be strong. For both of you."

And as the eldest child, I had to remain calm, although in my mind somebody was screaming, "Run! It's your fault! You should have checked on him earlier! So run, little rabbit! Run and never look back!"

That was how my Tito Reggie died—not in a dingy, little cell, but in a cold, small bathroom as he was about to start with his new job, his new life. Died of a heart attack, although I suspect it was more because of a broken heart. Though I would never really know what happened during those last days he spent in the province, I have reason to suspect that something happened in Laguna that triggered his attack.

Did his wife push him away again? Did he get discouraged because his new business didn't work out well? Did he just suddenly give up for no reason at all? I wouldn't know, although I wish I did. It would help ease the feeling of guilt I have over not being able to come to his rescue when his heart gave out.

I'm sorry that I wasn't there for Tito. I only hope that in his last few days, he was able to feel loved, if not by his family, then by us.

Josh Bersales, 22, is a marketing officer for a publishing company.

Sado-masochistic government

IN ORDERING THE RELEASE OF CONvicted rapist Daniel Smith to the US Embassy, President Macapagal-Arroyo diminished and humiliated all Filipinos, including herself and her minions. We Filipinos have become second-class citizens in our own country. We are not the masters of our own house. Our daughters can be raped in our own home, and the rapist, if he is an American soldier, can get away with it.

Smith's transfer revealed the authoritarian character of GMA's rule. According to Erich Fromm, world-renowned psychiatrist, in his seminal book "Escape from Freedom," the authoritarian character consists of two sides. One is abject submission to a dominant power (masochism) and the other is domination and oppression of those under its power (sadism). GMA kisses the feet of her American masters, while she thrashes her countrymen who dare to assert their rights under the Constitution she has solemnly sworn to uphold.

The police and the military under her administration violently disperse street demonstrators who merely exercise their constitutional right to free speech and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances. Judges, lawyers, journalists and social activists who dare to criticize government, or defend those who are oppressed, are killed or assaulted. Some have been tortured. The GMA administration displays what the psychiatrist Fromm calls "sado-masochism."

The list of tyrants who have exhibited sado-masochism includes Hitler (submission to racial superiority), Stalin (paranoia), Chile's Augusto Pinochet (submission to the United States), Ivan the Terrible (submission to a higher being), Joseph McCarthy, King Charles I of England and King Louis XVI of France, (both were executed by their people), Nero (who became mad) and Idi Amin of Africa. Some were killed by their own people while others died in bed; but in either case, the judgment of history on them has been harsh.

—MANUEL F. ALMARIO,
mfalmario@yahoo.com

Center funded by Office of the President

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS STORY "GMA cites resiliency of Guinsaugon" (PDI, 12/27/06) written by Jolene R. Bulambot and Jani Arnaiz of INQUIRER Visayas. The report stated that "The President was also scheduled to inaugurate, with taipan Lucio Tan, the school buildings, health and day care centers and other facilities donated by the Federation of Filipino Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FFCCI)."

May we clarify that the health care center was not donated by the FFCCI. The P1,567,684.32 used for its construction came from the Office of the President, which coursed it through the Office of the Secretary of Health, which in turn released funds to the Center for Health-Eastern Visayas.

This was one of the facilities that was to be turned over by the President on Dec. 26, 2006. However, due to inclement weather, she was not able to make it to Guinsaugon, St. Bernard.

—BENITA NAVARES PASTOR, MD, MHA,
director 4,
Department of Health-Eastern Visayas,
Government Center, Palo, Leyte

No apologies to an important friend and ally

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE NEWS story titled "US military apologizes for S. Korea rape." (PDI, 1/16/07)

I wonder why the US military can apologize to South Korea for a crime committed by one its soldiers, but refuses to do the same to the Philippines for a similar crime.

Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith has been convicted of rape here in our country. The 23-year-old US soldier in South Korea is still a suspect, but the US military has already issued an apology to the host country. "I deeply regret and personally apologize for this terrible incident that has resulted in grave injury to a Korean civilian. This vicious act is an affront to all soldiers," Maj. Gen. John Morgan, the acting US 8th Army commander, was quoted as saying.

On the other hand, instead of issuing an apology for the rape of Nicole by Smith, Gen. William Fallows, supreme commander of the US-Pacific forces, cancelled the Balikatan exercises for this year (the exercises were rescheduled after Smith was given back to US custody) to show his government's displeasure with Smith's imprisonment at the Makati City Jail.

Is this the way to treat an important ally and "friend"? The US military already has its way with regard to the custody of Smith. The least it can do is to issue an apology to the Filipino people for the rape of Nicole.

Both the rape of a 67-year-old Korean woman by an American soldier and the rape of a 23-year-old Filipino woman by an American soldier fall into the category of a "vicious act [that] is an affront to all soldiers."

—EDWARD FELIX M. DONATO,
edwardfelixdonato@yahoo.com.ph

Best of RP, another country's pride?

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS signed an agreement that would allow Filipino caregivers and nurses to work in Japan. Now, would that help our nation's economy, or would it take more Filipino workers and talents away from our country?

At 17, I'm wondering if we'd see again that time when Filipinos preferred to dedicate their skills and talents primarily to developing their homeland rather than to working for a distant country. Well, who could blame them? Job opportunities here seem to be very scarce—or should I say, not in the vocabulary of our government. Is this because the government is content enough to see our economy getting a boost from the billions of dollars that overseas Filipinos are sending to their families and friends here?

Stories about licensed Filipino doctors preferring to work as nurses abroad are so depressing. Filipinos need doctors too, for goodness' sake. But I guess it wouldn't be a surprise anymore if, one day, I'd hear about "the best among Filipinos" being heralded as "The Pride of Czechoslovakia!" or something like that.

I wonder if that time would come when Manny Pacquiao would rather box for the glory of Mexicans rather than for the glory of Filipinos.

—MARIA ANGELICA T. REYES,
3 Poinsettia St.,
Doña Manuela Subd.,
Las Piñas City

Telephone poles are not for hanging

I WAS DEEPLY OFFENDED BY COLUMnist Conrado de Quiros' suggestion to use the telephone poles for the execution, by hanging, of US President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. (PDI, 1/17/2007)

The telephone pole is an icon of the American landscape. It practically represents America itself. To defile it by using it as a tool in the execution of such an infamous set of characters is highly objectionable, to say the least. Every man, woman and child would remember the event when cruising on an expressway or a country road.

I would like De Quiros to take into consideration American sensibilities when writing his columns. Otherwise, I see very little in his columns to disagree with, and much that is reflective of the spirit of the American people who are, at this critical time in human history, forced to deal with a leadership that is totally at odds with their traditional ideals and objectives.

—PETER DUVEEN,
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RP-US ties more important than justice?

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE NEWS report titled "GMA: I did it for US ties." (PDI, 1/9/07)

President Macapagal-Arroyo committed another major mistake. She should not have allowed the return of the rape convict, US Marine Daniel Smith, to US custody. She should have waited for the courts to decide on the matter.

As a young Filipina, I feel pity for Nicole. What was the use of Judge Benjamin Pozon's order if the Arroyo government may choose not to implement it? It was clearly stated in the judge's order that Smith should be in the Makati City Jail. The President's men justified Smith's transfer by citing provisions in the Visiting Forces Agreement. But the Court of Appeals had already said that an appeal is not part of the "judicial proceedings" as used in the context of the VFA.

Why did President Arroyo give priority to US-Philippine ties over the rights and interests of Filipinos, more specifically those of Nicole, a Filipino citizen like her? How could this government say that there was no malice behind government's surrender of Smith to US custody when, in fact, it was done in the dead of night? Yet the President and her men have the gall to ask the Filipino people to understand what they did and to stand behind the country's alliance with the United States.

As the President, Ms Arroyo should be a model of "wise decision-making." On this score, I would say that she failed. She is also a woman—like the rape victim. She should have put herself in the place of Nicole before allowing Smith's transfer.

—LORDEZ MAY L. DUEÑAS,
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Panghulo, Obando,
Bulacan

Baseless claims made to justify Iloilo raid

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ justify as necessary the use of force against the supporters of Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr.? Just because it was alleged that prisoners and NPA (New People's Army) rebels were deployed to defend the provincial capitol? Hasn't Gonzalez heard of the word hearsay? How could the justice secretary give reason to that dastardly raid on the Iloilo provincial capitol on the baseless claim that the Tupas camp had let prisoners and communist guerrillas join his barricade of supporters?

Was it necessary to enforce the Ombudsman order dismissing Tupas with the use of force and violence. Gonzalez argued that it was justified because his allegations were true; and because he knew for a fact that Bayan had openly declared support for Tupas and Bayan is the NPA in Iloilo. Such baseless accusations from a justice secretary.

Clearly our country is in grave danger of people like Gonzalez who justify the use of violence with hearsay.

The raid on the Iloilo capitol was a clear manifestation that history is about to repeat itself. For how can we be so indifferent to let people like Gonzalez, whose loyalty to Lady Justice is doubtful and who is serving someone whose mandate is in question, continue to corrupt our minds, rights and our very society with his perverse logic?

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Why can't I come home?
- Ninoy Aquino
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Muslim leaders plan poll guidelines

COTABATO CITY—MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS and nongovernment organizations in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) met Friday on Islam's criteria of leadership which they hope would provide guidance to the region's over one million voters in the May elections.

Ustadz Abdulwahid Inju, the mufti (Guardian of the House of Opinion) of Tawi-Tawi, gave the position of ulama (scholars) on election and Islam's prerequisite to leadership during a voter's education forum in Davao City last week.

Joseph Palanca, program officer of the Local Government Support Program in ARMM (LGSPA), said the muftis were to inform Muslim communities of their consensus on the issue, the muftis being apolitical authorities who would not be part of the May elections, either as candidates or party endorser.

The muftis met Mindanao's leading peace advocates on the issue of leadership and elections in last week's forum organized through the Citizens' Education on Good Governance of the LGSPA.

"As it was in the time of the prophet, (the leadership of) our generation has the reality of mixed community of constituency of Muslims, indigenous tribes as well as followers of other religions than Islam," Inju told the forum.

"The lamentable truth is that the Muslim quality of leadership has diminished since (the time) Prof. Masserman made his comment on 'Who Were History's Great Leaders,' in which (Masserman) pointed to the Prophet Muhammad as the one who had his criteria," said Inju, the president of ARMM muftis.

The mufti was referring to a quote in his PowerPoint presentation from Prof. Jules Masserman, an American psychoanalyst, who set the standards for a readers' forum's selection of history's great leaders in the Time newsmagazine's issue on July 15, 1974.

Inju noted that Masserman briefly expressed his leadership criteria in three short clauses: "Provide for the well-being of the led; provide a social organization in which the people feel being relatively secure; and provide the led with one set of belief."

The ulama said elections are usually associated with bribe-giving and receipt of it in many forms.

In a fatwa (collective opinion), they said anything meant to influence important decisions, including judgment on legal cases and selection of leaders, is a form of corruption of which the Muslim is warned of hellfire after death.

"Any bribery is a form of corruption. And there is double jeopardy in bribery and corruption when one tends to make the Words of God suit to his own whims, at the expense of the community and people whom he claims to be delivering from oppression," Inju said.

But on condemnation of misdeeds, many of the ulama in the forum believed that Islam limits condemnation "upon the act itself" and not on the doer. Muslims, they said, should not go any further by judging the doer, as wise judgment solely belongs to God.

Inju said Moro leaders should take the cue from Prophet Muhammad's leadership, noting that the prophet promulgated in 628 AD his government's Charter of Privilege which granted Christian residents and the Monks of the St. Catherine Monastery in Mt. Sinai the "freedom of worship and movement; freedom to appoint their own judges and own and maintain property; exemption from military service and right to protection in (times of) war." *Nash B. Maulana, Inquirer Mindanao*

US AMBASSADOR Kristie Kenney and Sen. Richard Gordon, head of the Philippine National Red Cross, help US Marines distribute clothes, food, hygiene kits and other items to families in Legazpi City who were displaced by mudflows and floods during Supertyphoon "Reming."

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

US, Red Cross execs give gifts to typhoon victims

LEGAZPI CITY—UNITED STATES Ambassador Kristie Kenney and Sen. Richard Gordon, Philippine National Red Cross chair, arrived here yesterday to help the US Marines in giving away gifts to typhoon victims.

Hundreds of affected families received clothing, food, hygiene kits and other items in the project dubbed "Operation Goodwill," an annual donation made by members of the 3rd US Marine Expeditionary Brigade and their families to communities and charitable organizations in the country.

Kenney said they came here to help the disaster victims get back on their feet and to think about how they could continue to respond to natural disasters.

"Man cannot control nature. We don't know when a typhoon will strike or what it will do and when a volcano will erupt, so we can think about how we prepare for disaster," Kenney said.

She said the Red Cross and the US were working together on how they could warn citizens and share information quickly in times of disaster.

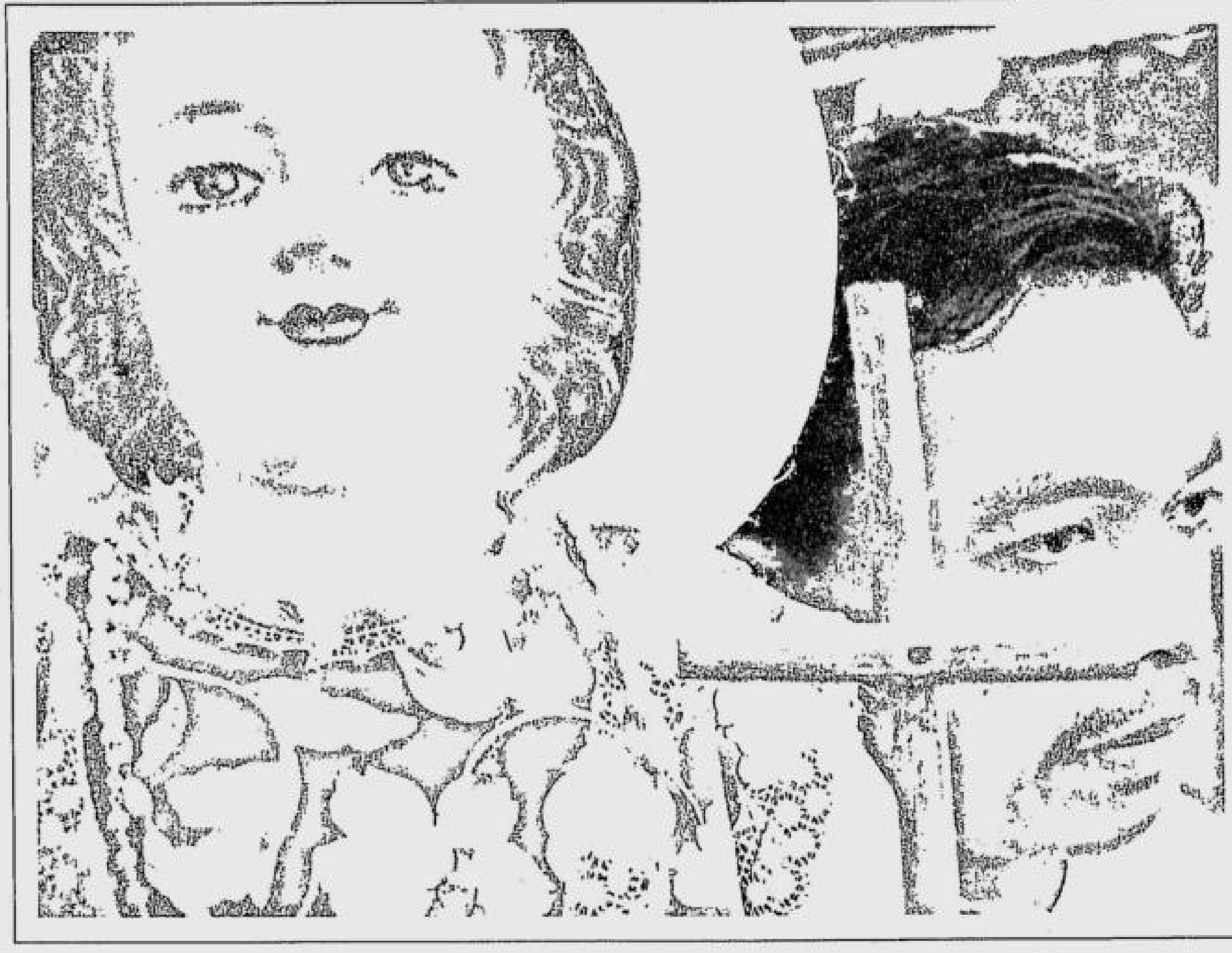
Kenney and Gordon tested a newly installed nationwide text alert messaging system funded by the US Agency for International Development and managed by the Red Cross.

This emergency information system will alert local officials and residents with weather reports, evacuation instructions, and vital disaster information via text message.

Gordon said the new system would increase the people's level of awareness and quicken the disaster response of authorities so communities would get answers to their relief needs faster.

Jon Lindborg, USAID mission director, said the big issue now aside from long-term restoration efforts comes in terms of disaster preparedness and planning.

Kenney and Gordon successfully sent the first text message using the new system. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



DEVOTION Residents of Guinobatan, Albay parade images of the Child Jesus during a procession. The residents of the town are still reeling from the disaster brought by mudflows and flooding at the height of Supertyphoon "Reming." Relief agencies have started distributing goods to the residents, but recovery is a lengthy process for those who lost homes and loved ones to the disaster.

NINO JESUS ORBETA/ INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Youth group tells House: Heed call vs tuition hike

A MILITANT NATIONAL YOUTH organization appealed to members of the House of Representatives to stop their obsessive preparation for the coming elections and resolve the controversial tuition hike approved by the Commission on Higher Education.

"Incumbent candidates should set aside destructive, divisive electoral campaigning for the moment and focus on pressing and unresolved issues that concern youth and the people before Congress adjourns in three weeks," Kabataan party-list national president Raymond Palatino said in a statement furnished the INQUIRER.

Palatino specifically pointed to the new CHED Memorandum Order No. 14 or the guidelines for applications for tuition and other fee increases.

He said they expected that private schools would soon file new applications for tuition and other fee hikes next month.

"It will lead to another round of illegal tuition hikes that did not undergo student consultation if Congress and CHED fail to act and resolve the matter immediately," Palatino said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Baguio wants better terms for John Hay

BAGUIO CITY—ACTING MAYOR Reinaldo Bautista Jr. asked the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) on Thursday to review its financial agreements with the city because of the local government's failure to collect its share from the privatization of Camp John Hay.

But BCDA president Narciso Abaya begged off from negotiating a new sharing deal. Abaya asked Bautista to instead await the passage of two congressional measures that would resolve the crisis over the debts of Camp John Hay's developer.

Bautista had notified BCDA chair Aloysius Santos that BCDA's outstanding debt has cost the city the Baguio Convention Center.

The city bought the facility from the Government Service Insurance System for P250 million by mortgaging future revenues from Camp John Hay's rent.

Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco), a firm owned by real estate giant Fil Estate, was already in debt to BCDA when the mortgage agreement was signed.

CJHDevco suspended all of its payments in 2005 when the Supreme Court affirmed its 2003 decision nullifying the tax benefits that former President Fidel Ramos gave to the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone in 1994.

The decision has affected all BCDA-administered economic zones, except for the Subic Bay Freeport.

Bautista also questioned BCDA's decision to abandon some of its policy commitments to Baguio, when it challenged 19 conditions outlined in City Resolution 362 of 1994.

BCDA agreed to abide by the conditions in exchange for the city's approval of the Camp John Hay lease agreement.

But last year, the agency said Baguio was entitled only to 2 percent of the rent paid by CJHDevco, and not the 25 percent share stated by Resolution 362, Bautista said.

"Abaya said they respect more Republic Act 7227 (the BCDA law)," he said.

Based on this assertion, BCDA has refused to acknowledge that it owes Baguio more than P500 million.

Bautista said Abaya has placed the debt burden on the shoulders of its estate manager, the John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC).

"Abaya said BCDA itself is not obligated to pay the John Hay debts to the city. What CJHDevco owes the city, it is JHMC that pays it, because BCDA cannot dip into the revenues of (the Clark Special Economic Zone) or the Poro Point Development Corp. to pay John Hay's debts," he said.

Bautista said he wanted to come out with a new sharing deal but talks broke down and led to a stalemate because Congress may end up changing the rules.

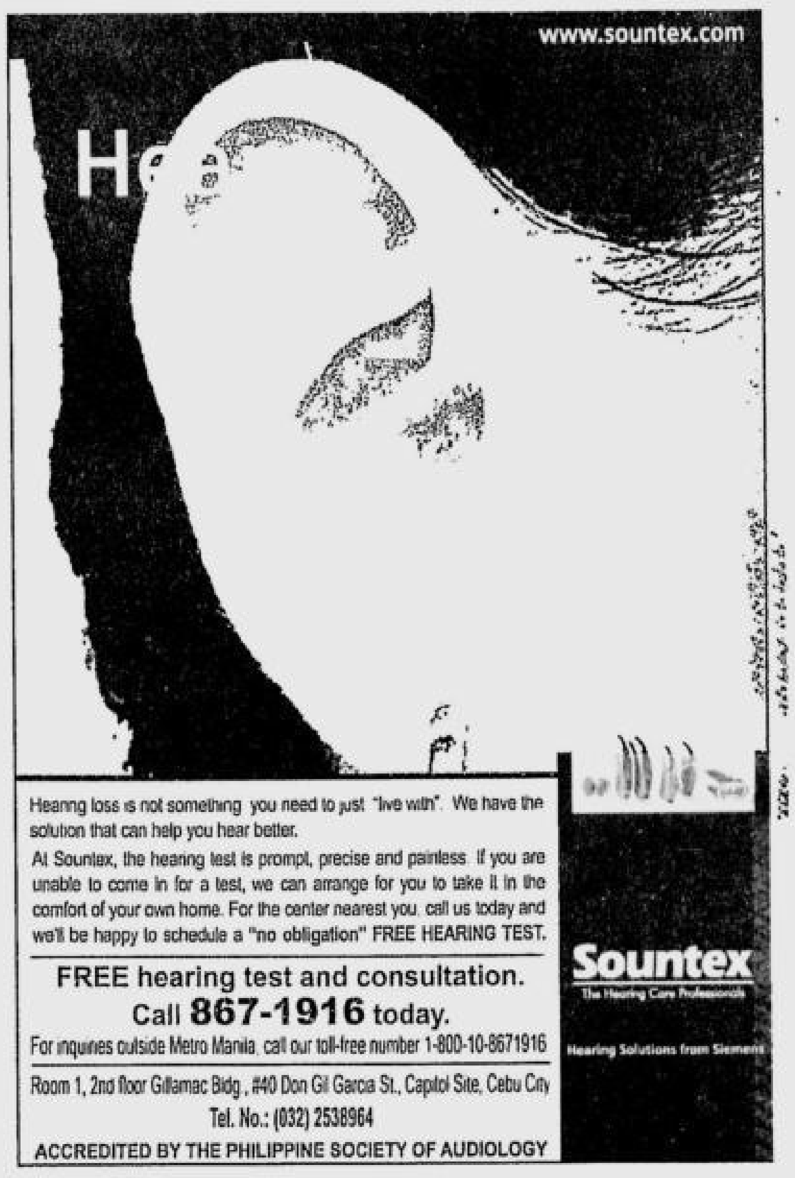
The bicameral conference committee must reconcile the proposed law that restores the tax benefits of the economic zones in John Hay, Clark and Poro Point. The Senate measure imposes additional tax regulations, which has alarmed BCDA zone managers, Bautista said.

He said the committee is also scheduled to discuss a proposed law that condones the debts incurred by businesses in these zones.

Because the court nullified their tax incentives, businesses like CJHDevco now owe government much more in real estate taxes and income taxes going back to the year they started operating.

It is not clear whether the measure will also nullify CJHDevco's rental debts, Bautista said.

"For now, there is an injunction protecting CJHDevco. [Neither BCDA nor the Bureau of Internal Revenue] can collect these debts until the laws are passed," he said. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



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Forest destruction to wipe out water sources

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE alarming rate of watershed destruction in the Cordillera is also threatening to wipe out the major sources of potable water in the region, a National Irrigation Administration official said on Friday.

Abraham Akilit, NIA Cordillera manager, said while drastic measures are needed to restore water resources in critically endangered watersheds, the bottom line is also to save the remaining sources of drinking water.

"If the watersheds become wastelands, potable water will also be gone," he said.

The NIA recently unveiled a P762.4-million master development plan to save watersheds in the region from destruction.

The rehabilitation of denuded forests will be concentrated on watersheds along the Abra, Chico, Magat and Agno rivers, the Cordillera's four major river systems.

These rivers trace their headwaters from the Bauko-Tadian watershed and Mt. Data National Park, all in Bauko, Mt. Province.

Flowing from these major rivers are 13 river basins that supply water to 17 national irrigation systems in the Cordillera.

But NIA identified the Agno and Chico rivers as the most critically endangered due to rapid forest destruction, increased area of vegetation, soil erosion and siltation.

"The trend of annual water reduction in the region's watersheds is fast and is drying up irrigation systems," Akilit said.

The loss of water in areas that are supposed to be irrigated is just one way to illustrate the continuing degradation of the region's environment, he said.

In 2006, the NIA was supposed to irrigate 71,916 hectares of land but only 43,876 were serviced, he said.

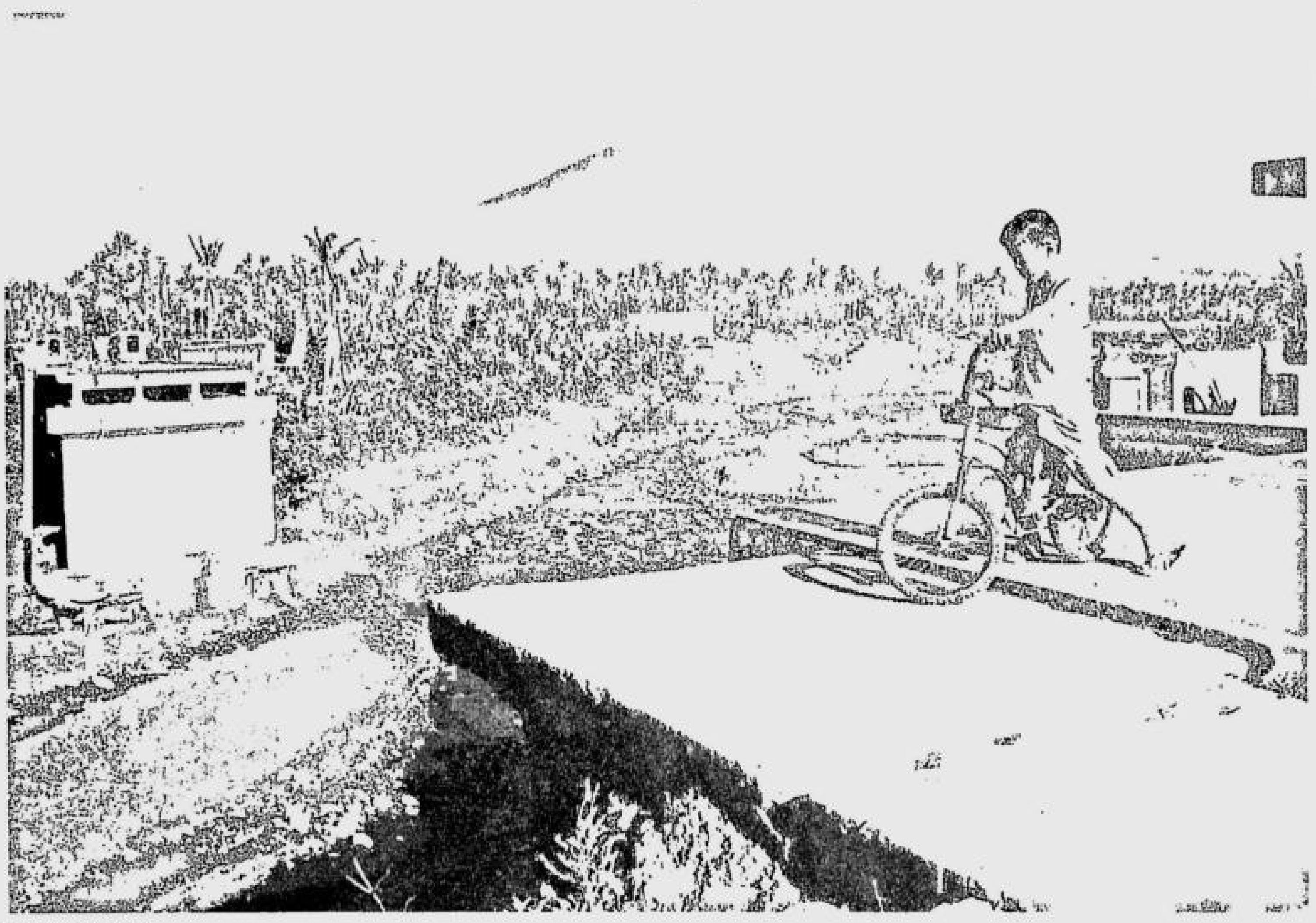
What is worse, Akilit said, is that watershed denudation has also begun to damage the mangrove ecosystem.

"Marine life in endangered watersheds is fast disappearing due to the untold millions of tons of silt downloaded from the uplands," he said.

"Naturally, even the remaining sources of potable water will be adversely affected," he said.

Akilit said the Mt. Province government recently promised to help stop the possible loss of watersheds and water sources.

The provincial agricultural environment and natural resources office of Mt. Province signed an agreement with NIA and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to rehabilitate the Bauko-Tadian watershed. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



DEAD END

This concrete bridge connecting Barangay Batang and Barangay Nasisi in Ligao City, Albay, was destroyed at the height of Supertyphoon "Reming" on Nov. 30 last year.

Negros to tap 37,000 ha for bio-diesel

BACOLOD CITY—THE PROVINCIAL government of Negros Occidental and the state-owned Philippine Forest Corp. will go into bio-diesel production by planting the oil-producing jatropha in over 37,000 hectares of land in the province.

Gov. Joseph Marañon yesterday said the joint venture project would be piloted in a 1,000-hectare model farm in a property owned by the provincial government in Barangay Minoyan, Murcia.

"We will show to the public that money can be gained by planting jatropha," Marañon said.

He pointed out that even with just 500 ha of land planted with jatropha, it was feasible to purchase a crushing machine and produce bio-diesel.

Jatropha is a drought-resistant perennial shrub or small tree that has an economic life of up to 35 years and can live for 50 years. It grows fast, with little or no need for maintenance and can reach a height of 3 to 8 meters, he added.

The governor said that based on the experience of India, 3 kg of jatropha seeds can produce one liter of crude jatropha oil for bio-diesel production.

Marañon said the lands to be planted with jatropha are all owned by the provincial government—5,433 ha in Candoni, 2,301 ha in Ilog, 1,000 ha in Murcia, 3,467 ha in Kanbankalan City, 6,933 ha in Himamaylan City, 10,000 ha in San Carlos City, 3,437 ha in Calatrava and 5,000 ha in Cadiz City.

PhilForest, a subsidiary of the Natural Resources Development Corp. under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is expected to provide the jatropha seeds, the governor said.

The government plans to produce 5.6 billion liters of bio-fuel from jatropha plantations around the country in the next 10 to 12 years, according to Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr., PhilForest president and executive officer.

Lozada said the initial investment for every hectare of a jatropha commercial plantation ranges from P32,119 to P52,770, and the return on investment ranges from P90,000 to P1.8 million with the payback period between the second and third year.

Potential yield ranges from 1.25 to 12.5 tons per hectare depending on the site, climate and tending operation, a PhilForest primer said. *Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

DepEd asked to reduce disruption of classes

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—A board member here has asked the Department of Education to limit the number of activities in public elementary and high schools that cause the suspension of classes and disrupt classroom studies.

Lawyer Juan Nazarro Jr., the provincial board's committee chair on education and legal matters, said that while school extra-curricular activities, like athletics and science fairs, are welcome, having too much of them would also be counter-productive.

"These activities are set on different dates within the school year and students have to [skip classes] to attend them," he said.

"These activities cut the precious time supposed to be devoted to classroom study," he added.

In a resolution filed before the board recently, Nazarro asked Education Secretary Jesli Lapus to initiate a program that would limit and synchronize all school activities.

But the DepEd in Benguet doused Nazarro's proposal, saying the activities were made part of a yearlong school calendar prepared by the DepEd national office.

The division confirmed the following activities that Nazarro enumerated in his resolution: Athletics, press conference, damath (a math system that makes use of the indigenous board game "dama"), science quiz and fair, quiz bee, National Music Competitions for Young Artists (Namcya), student technological entrepreneurship program (STEP) and other academic and technical skills competitions.

These contests are often held in four levels—district (town), division (provincial), regional, and national.

"But it would be difficult to synchronize them because some activities involved the same participants and it would be hard for the school calendar to hold them all at the same time," said Susan Dawang, Benguet DepEd human resources and development officer.

Dawang said while classes are suspended when these activities are held, schools are still required to complete the minimum of 206 school days a year.

"That's why classes are sometimes held on Saturdays especially when the suspension was caused by a typhoon," she said.

Nazarro also complained that while the DepEd allowed these school activities, the local governments were often asked to fund them. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Support for small enterprises

DAVAO CITY—The East Asean Growth Area (Eaga), which groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines (BIMP), has called on the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to help establish a fund for small-medium enterprises (SMEs) in the area. During the 3rd BIMP-Eaga summit held at the sidelines of the Asean summit in Cebu, BIMP Ministers said the ADB, as Eaga advisor, should strengthen its provision and technical and financial services to advance recent economic initiatives in the sub-region. They also urged the private sector, particularly the BIMP-Eaga Business Council, to intensify cross-border trade, investment, and tourism activities.

Judy Quiros, Inquirer Mindanao

33 Badjao families lose homes

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A pre-dawn fire razed at least 26 houses on stilts, which were built by the government for Badjao families, in Lamitan, Basilan on Friday. Reports from Lamitan Mayor Roderick Furigay's office show that 33 families had been displaced by the fire and damage was placed at around P1 million. The houses, made of indigenous materials, were built under President Macapagal-Arroyo's program for indigenous people in the province.

Inquirer Mindanao

Seminar on proper poll conduct

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Commission on Elections Commissioner Romeo Brawner asked election officials in Cagayan Valley to help restore the good image of the commission. Brawner, who conducted a two-day seminar for Comelec officials in the region, said the May elections would be the appropriate time to save the tarnished image of the poll body. "Do not [allow yourselves to be] used by any politician [who want to promote his interest]. Let us make the coming elections honest, orderly, peaceful and credible," he said. Brawner briefed Comelec officials on their proper conduct during the elections, voter's ethics and ways to ensure peaceful and honest elections.

Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Rebel slain in Bataan firefight

BALANGA CITY—A suspected leader of Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB) was gunned down while five others were arrested after a firefight with policemen in Morong, Bataan, on Thursday. Reports from the provincial police headquarters in Camp Tolentino here said Christopher Carlos alias "Ke Benoy," a leader of an RHB assassination team, was killed in the 10-minute firefight in Barangay Binaritan. Bataan police director Senior Supt. Odelon Ramoneda said Carlos and 15 other suspected RHB members were holding a meeting when policemen arrived and engaged them in a firefight. Ramoneda said the policemen were serving Carlos an arrest warrant.

Greg Refraccion, Inquirer Central Luzon

Seminar on forming NGOs

A SEMINAR for nongovernment organizations, cooperatives, foundations, local government units, and corporate organizations will be held Feb. 7 from 1-5 p.m. at Richville Hotel, 286 Edsa, Mandaluyong City. For details, contact Tritium Knowledge Center Publishing (TKCP) at tel. no. 531-0084 or 0919-229-9777; 0919-229-9780; and 0915-780-4379. TKCP is the publisher and distributor of the resource books: Proposal Writing Guidebook, 2nd edition and the Directory of International Funding Organizations, NGOs, Corporate Donors, and Relief Agencies.

Top Bicol criminal slain

SORSOGON CITY—Police gunned down Sorsogon's most wanted person after he allegedly grabbed a gun from his police escorts on the way to the Sorsogon provincial jail on Jan. 14. City police chief Supt. Formoso Argarin said Gilbert Melitante of Juban, Sorsogon, an escapee who was facing holdup-robbery and murder cases, was on board a police car escorted by four police personnel at around 8 p.m. when he snatched the gun of PO1 Gerardo Lladones. Melitante was able to fire twice before the police fired back, hitting him in the chest. Melitante's younger brother Boyet said the family did not believe the police's claim of self-defense and will seek further investigation into the case.

Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Cops hunt Laguna dad's brod

CALAMBA CITY—Police are hunting down a brother of a city councilor here who shot dead a man and wounded another in Barangay Parlan on Jan. 14. Calamba police chief Supt. Roland Bustos said Mario Casunuran, younger brother of councilor Pito Casunuran, was identified by witnesses as the man who killed Nilolentija Celda, 30, and wounded security guard Jerry Tuplo, 23. Bustos said Celda lost his way home at about 5:30 a.m. and entered an alley leading to Casunuran's house. Casunuran, who was then having a quarrel with his wife, shot the victim upon seeing him. Tuplo, who was standing a few meters from the suspect's house, positively identified the councilor's brother as the gunman.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Albay lineman dies

MALINAO, Albay—A lineman of the Albay Electric Cooperative (Aleco) died and another suffered third degree burns when a caretaker of the town substation switched on the power at about 5:30 p.m. as the linemen were connecting the electric wires from the town proper to Barangay Pawa here Wednesday afternoon. Police said Jimmy Camata, 27, died on the spot while Javier Campit and foreman Emiliano Dacullo were rushed to a Tabaco City hospital for treatment for third degree burns.

Job B. Belen, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Mayor's link to murder bolstered

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—TWO men charged together with a mayor with the murder of Starline Times Recorder publisher Philip Agustin kept a close watch of the latter's house twice before the May 10, 2005 slay, a witness told the court at the resumption of the trial in Manila on Monday.

Cesar Mendoza, the ninth witness to take the stand, testified having seen Nilo Morete and Manuel Alday conduct surveillance at various times of the day around Agustin's house on May 3 and 5, 2005, the public prosecutor on the case, Nestor Lazaro, told the INQUIRER by phone.

Mendoza, 50 and a fisherman, said he saw the surveillance operations because he lives a few meters from Agustin's house at Purok Mulawin in Barangay Paltic in Dingalan, Aurora.

Agustin, 54, was shot dead at 11:45 p.m. or a few hours after arriving to deliver copies of the special edition of his weekly paper.

The May 2-8 edition carried stories critical of Dingalan Mayor Jaime Ylarde. It featured stories on alleged missing calamity funds, relief goods and logs, construction of a cockpit that used the aluminum roof of the municipal slaughter house, and slow resettlement of more than 1,000 families displaced by the landslides in November and December 2004.

According to Lazaro, Mendoza also said during Monday's trial that Morete and Alday were known to him as "mga tauhan" (workers) of Ylarde.

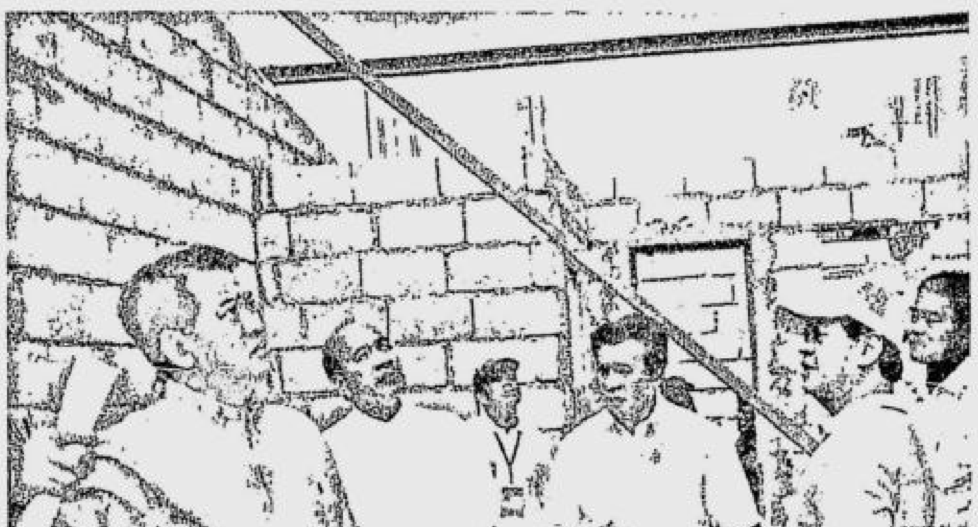
Ylarde was initially dropped from the case but was charged in May 2006 after the publisher's daughter, Rosebelle Cruz, asked Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to have the case reviewed. Ylarde entered a not-guilty plea.

In July last year, the Supreme Court approved the transfer of the case from the regional trial court in Baler, Aurora, to Branch 6 of the Manila RTC. This was made on the request of Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño who complained of bias by the previous judge.

Ylarde has been detained at the Manila City Jail since September. He was present at Monday's trial and declined media interviews. His relatives did not take calls from the INQUIRER.

Morete and Alday have remained in hiding. In November, they established contact with a local official but withdrew plans to surface, citing fear for their lives.

Reynaldo Morete, the third man who had been charged with the murder, had turned state witness and remained in the custody of the Department of Justice's witness protection program together with Cruz, the complainant and also a witness in the case. Morete claimed to have served as a lookout for the two gunmen. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



NEW HOMES CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Vice President Noli de Castro, also housing czar, inspects newly built houses at the Northville 8 resettlement site in Malolos, Bulacan, one of the areas where residents living on rail tracks were to be moved to give way to a new railway system.

Police, Army form watchdog for troops guarding candidates

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—The police and the military in Central Luzon have agreed to create a provisional coordinating body that will supervise and monitor troops securing local candidates in the region in the May elections.

"All policemen and soldiers assigned to politicians will be pooled under that body. Coordination on election-related security matters shall be centralized there," Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Central Luzon police chief, told the INQUIRER.

Rafanan said the body would also serve as a keeper of data on personnel and firearms deployed for security work.

"The deployment of personnel cannot anymore be unilaterally done by ground commanders. They would have to coordinate with that body," he said.

The body, Rafanan said, will mainly coordinate with the Commission on Elections, which approves the requests of candidates for security personnel.

The police are authorized to provide bodyguards to candidates vying for the positions of vice mayor, mayor, governor and representative, he said. An aspirant is entitled to one police bodyguard but could request for more when the threat to his life is confirmed to be real, he said.

Rafanan said the purpose of this setup is to ensure that there are enough policemen for regular anticriminality and anti-insurgency work, and ample security for 33,513 polling precincts in Central Luzon's seven provinces.

It is also a way of preventing clashes between friendly forces, according to Lt. Gen. Bonifacio Ramos, chief of the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom).

He said in the past, a few cases broke out when security personnel were mistaken for armed civilians.

"The essence of this coordination effort is that they know each other regardless of whoever politician they are securing. Most importantly, security personnel will have to wear their uniform while at work to avoid conflicts," Ramos said.

He clarified that it is the PNP, not the military, that plays a primary role in election-related security issues.

Ramos said Nolcom's units in Central Luzon would not be "as pressured" in the security of candidates.

"We will not be disturbing the deployment of forces because we are right in areas where we expect communist rebels to be doing extortion activities," he said. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

IFUGAO ART

The tradition that helped make the Ifugao an international name has improved. Sculptors of Asin village in Baguio City no longer cater merely to walk-in tourists but produce massive volumes of images commissioned by overseas traders.

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

4 Pangasinan areas seen as poll hot spots

DAGUPAN CITY—THE COMMISSION on Elections here has identified three towns and a city in Pangasinan as possible hot spots in the May elections.

Lawyer Reddy Balarbar, provincial election officer, said San Carlos City and the towns of Binmaley, San Fabian and San Nicolas are potential hot spots and may be placed under Comelec control.

He said the Comelec, based on its Resolution No. 7773, "may place under its immediate and direct control, any political division, subdivision, unit or area affected by serious armed threats."

The Comelec, Balarbar said, will then have direct control and supervision over all national and local officials and employees, as well as over all national and local law enforcement agencies, deployed to the area.

Balabar said San Nicolas was the scene of violence in the 2004 elections, which included the murder of former Mayor Conrado Rodrigo and of militant farmer-leader Jose Doton.

The Comelec said it was expecting an intense mayoral race in San Fabian after former Mayor Romulo Magliba and Liga ng mga Barangay federation president Roland Villegas teamed up against incumbent Mayor Mojamito Libunao, who is seeking a third term.

In Binmaley, Mayor Simplicio Rosario will be challenged by former Mayor Rolando Domalanta, while San Carlos City Mayor Julian Resuello will be fielding his son, Vice Mayor Julier Resuello, against former Mayor Douglas Soriano.

Pangasinan Rep. Generoso Tulagan, a native of San Carlos, was earlier reported to be joining the mayoral race in the city. His son, Generoso Jr., will take his place in the congressional race that will include Soriano's brother, Gallant.

Mayor Resuello said he welcomed the Comelec's plan of placing his city under its control. "I prefer that the Comelec put the city under its control because this would protect (us) especially during the elections," he said.

Police are enforcing a gun ban during the election period nationwide.

In Candelaria, Quezon, two men were arrested for carrying firearms without permits from the Comelec.

Senior Supt. Victorio Caragan Jr., Quezon police chief, identified the arrested men as Renato Andaya and Cesar B. Fabul, both residents of Candelaria town.

Police said Fabul, a security guard, was arrested at a Comelec checkpoint along the Maharlika Highway.

A .38 cal. revolver that he carried was not covered by exemption from the Comelec.

Police also checked his background and found that he was a suspect in an armed robbery case.

Andaya was arrested by policemen Wednesday after he was spotted carrying a cal. 38 revolver.

Andaya failed to present papers showing he was exempt from the Comelec gun ban.

Caragan appealed to licensed gun owners, especially members of local gun clubs, to keep their guns at home during the election period.

"Give your gun a good cleaning and lubrication and give it a rest until the last day of the gun ban. Let us all work together for a peaceful conduct of the election," he said, addressing himself to gun owners.

He said policemen in uniforms are the only ones allowed to carry their service firearms.

Senior Supt. Rueben Theodore Sindac, Lucena police chief, said he had already met with the officers of at least three gun clubs in the city and appealed for their cooperation. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon with a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Divine icons help boys pursue education

By Niña Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CALAMBA CITY— "SYNONYMOUS to praying" is how 19-year-old Brian Viros describes the process of creating divine icons on tables, cabinets, and wooden "sangkalan" (kitchen chopping board).

"When I am creating icons, it is the same as serving God and praying as I see images of Christ and other saints all the time," he says.

Viros is one of the nine young scholars of the Don Bosco Fathers and Brothers, a religious order for the ministry of the young, poor and abandoned.

He is a college freshman taking an office management course.

Third among eight children, Viros says his parents can no longer afford his college education. His father is a construction worker and has a meager income while his mother sometimes accepts laundry services.

Like Viros, Rey Ramos, 18, also aspires to go to college in spite of poverty.

He graduated from high school in 2006. But because his father was getting limited income from construction work, he stopped going to school.

"I never asked my father if he could send me to college because I already knew the answer," he says.

Alternative

When Viros, Ramos and the other seven boys met Fr. Dennis Paez, SDB (Salesian of Don Bosco), they knew that their lives would change.

When Father Paez was assigned in Laguna in July 2006, he noticed a group of boys playing basketball in front of Don Bosco Tabor House in Barangay Pansol.

Don Bosco Tabor House is a place for retiring priests and priests' place for rest between assignments.

From frequent conversations with them, he found out that most of them were out of school youth and could not afford college education because of poverty.

"I taught them how to create icons and all of them were fast learners. Among the people whom I have taught this craft, the boys here are the best," he said in mixed Filipino and English. On Nov. 15, 2006, they started creating icons.

What happened became phenomenal, he said. "Three boys started doing icons, it became six, and then nine."

For almost two months of their project, Father Paez noticed that the craft of making icons was one of the interventions to drug addiction.

"This house became a hangout for the boys. They learned to spend their time (wisely and productively)," he says.

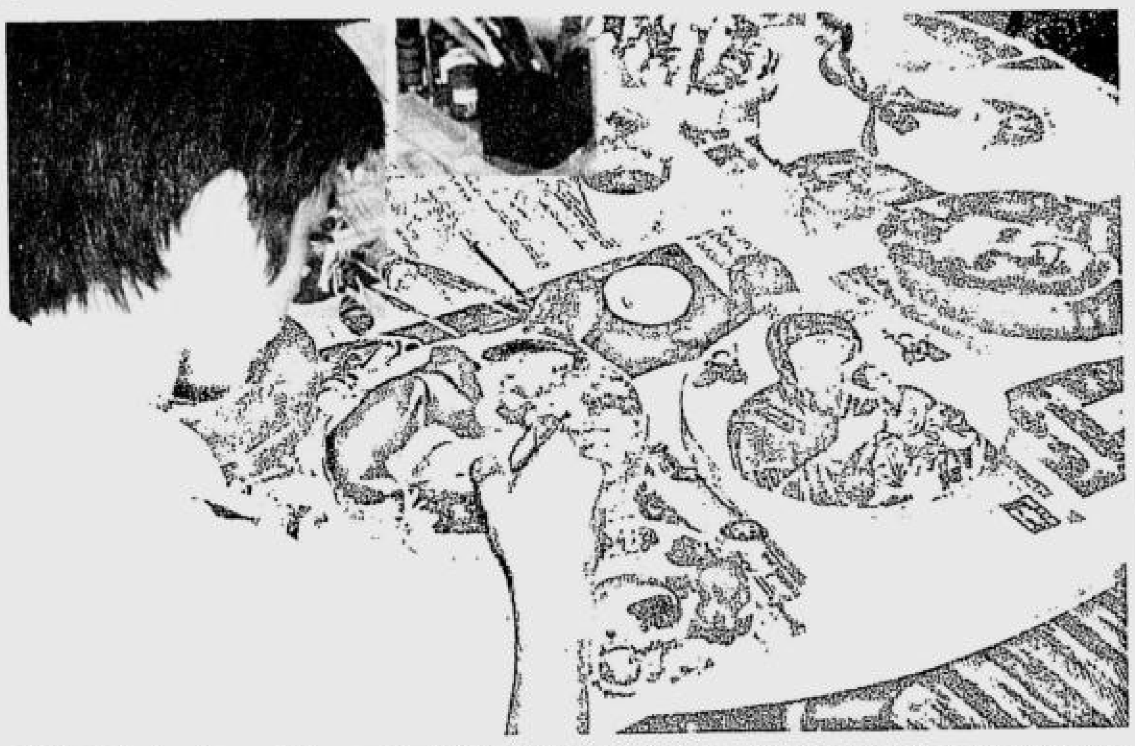
Viros says after his class, he goes to Don Bosco Tabor House and starts creating icons.

During weekends he spends the day either working with icons or helping the personnel clean the house.

Ramos says he was spending more time in Don Bosco than in the basketball court.

"I started to enjoy art. I could not believe I am capable of doing this," he says, referring to the kitchen chipboard icon he is doing.

> 'Everything is by hand and I cannot imagine it being done by a machine...'



ONE OF the Don Bosco scholars putting finishing touches on his work. NIÑA CATHERINE CALLEJA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Therapeutic

Father Paez learned the art of iconography through a Good Shepherd sister who taught him 15 years ago while he was studying for the priesthood.

He found it therapeutic so he taught other people how to do it.

"With 24 steps of handling the icons, this process calms the mind and makes one strive for excellence," he explains. "Everything is by hand and I cannot imagine it being done by a machine."

He notes that the process is meticulous. A mistake on the 23rd step can spoil the entire work.

He says he always tells the boys not to rush and take time in finishing the craft.

"Also, the fact that they are creating religious objects makes them more spiritual because these icons are windows to the divine," he adds.

For education

The money that the boys are getting from selling icons will be used for their education, which includes their allowance and tuition.

Father Paez says that sponsorship is not enough for the boys' education.

"The boys are learning new skills that they might use in the future," he adds.

He claims that without such attitudes as patience, perseverance and the eagerness to strive for excellence, they will not be ready for higher education.

Creating icons prepares them to study again, he says.

Last Christmas season, Father Paez recalls, many people bought from them kitchen icons that served as gifts to friends and loved ones.

As a result of their perseverance, the boys can now go to college in the coming semester.

Father Paez says they have submitted applications to different colleges in Laguna and will take entrance exams at the end of January.

"We are exploring the possibility of extending the scholarship to other youngsters who want to study but cannot afford so. But as of now, we just want to help the poor community here," he says.

NPA owns up to killing of ex-radio man in Albay

LEGAZPI CITY—THE NEW PEOPLE's Army in Albay admitted having masterminded the killing of Jose Loreno, a former radio broadcaster, who was shot dead Thursday evening while tending to his store in Daraga, Albay.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER by the National Democratic Front-Bicol, Greg Bañares, its spokesperson, said the operatives of the Santos Binamira Command enforced the "death sentence" on Loreno, who was "an active agent of the military and a high-ranking leader of the Kilusan Kontra Komunista (KKK)."

Bañares said Loreno was a legitimate target because of his resolute anticommunist stance and "his more than 15 years of active involvement in the fight against the revolution in Albay."

He added that Loreno was a former NPA member but surrendered to the military in 1987 in Metro Manila and was recruited as a military agent.

The NDF-Bicol said the members of the KKK, some of whom were former members of the communist group, were being used by the military in surveillance, harassment, and political killings.

It warned it would impose "revolutionary justice" on military death squads responsible for leftist killings.

Police said Loreno, 56, suffered two gunshot wounds in the head and died instantly.

Supt. Jose Capinpin, Daraga police chief, said two gunmen approached the former radio broadcaster and fired at him at close range while a third gunman served as a lookout. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

No politics, just governance, Palace vows

By Christine O. Avendano

MINDFUL OF THE BUSINESS community's fears about too much politicking in the runup to the May elections, the Arroyo administration has decided to refrain from engaging in political talk, at least until the campaigns start.

"We want to insulate and protect the gains of the economic reform program and the actual economic momentum from premature or excessive politics, especially that which would create an antagonistic environment that can cause apprehensions within the business community," said Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio yesterday.

Come election campaign time, Claudio said, the administration would try not to base political talk on personalities, focusing instead on issues such as governance.

He stressed that the economy would be its main campaign issue.

"We want to put the political discourse on a higher plane," Claudio said in a phone interview.

Palace officials had been relatively silent on their preparations for the May polls, particularly the very crucial senatorial race.

Unlike the opposition which has been announcing its senatorial bets, Malacañang has chosen to keep silent on the candidates it might be fielding.

For the nth time, Claudio said the administration would only be announcing its senatorial lineup before Feb. 12, the deadline for candidates to submit their certificates of candidacy for the May polls.

Actually, he said it was "pointless" and "counterproductive" to talk about the administration's senatorial bets "until they themselves have made their final decision" to join them.

"We have no insecurity about it," he said.

Claudio said that since the election campaign had not yet started, the administration would talk about governance and the economy.

"We would rather talk about actual developments—the bright prospects, the economic turnaround," he said.

He asked Congress to focus on passing pending legislation like the P1.126-trillion national budget for 2007 and the antiterror bill in its remaining nine session days.

Another bill that needs immediate passage is the measure seeking to give tax exemptions to low income earners and which will provide incentives to economic zones outside the Subic Bay Metropolitan Area.

Claudio stressed that the administration would want to put the economy on "center stage" in this election.

"Our campaign issue is the economy—where we are headed and what the alternatives the opposition has," he said.

Indeed, President Macapagal-Arroyo herself has been limiting her statements to the economy, declaring last week that she expected 2007 to be a boom year for the country.

Candidates getting away breaking polls funding laws, says Monsod

By Jerome Aning

WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION AND opposition camps scramble to gather campaign funds to secure victory in the coming midterm polls, former Commission on Elections Chair Christian Monsod has bewailed the poor enforcement of laws restricting political financing.

"Our politicians have perfected the art of lying with regard to contributions and expenditures [made during elections]," said Monsod in a forum on the role of money in Philippine politics, organized in Manila by the Money and Politics Working Group (MAP-Work).

MAP-Work is developing a comprehensive monitoring program for the coming elections with the support of the Washington DC-based International Foundation for Election Systems and the financial backing of the United States Agency for International Development.

The five nongovernmental organizations making up Map-Work's working group advocate the institution of long-term reforms seeking to reduce the role of money in elections.

Monsod expressed fears that political camps, particularly the administration, would maximize the use of money to secure their victory in the elections.

"There is the election campaign template involving the full range of tactics, the power of government resources and organization that is clearly being put in place by the administration to ensure its victory," he said.

The opposition, on the other hand, is also desperate to secure funding to boost its campaign so it could win enough seats in both houses of Congress to initiate and successfully conclude an impeachment trial against the President.

According to Monsod, the diversion of government resources to political campaigns—through "pork barrel" allocations, congressional "insertions" in the budget measures, the passing of campaign vouchers to government-owned and -controlled firms and "intelligence funds"—were rampant during elections.

Monsod said that in his experience, the estimate of the amount needed to run a political campaign was almost always overestimated, "through double or multiple counting of the same [amount of] money."

Monsod said it was hopeless to find useful organized data and analyses of election spending at the Comelec, as financial records are kept by the agency's legal department.

He said many candidates, especially the losers, deem it "safer" not to file a report on contributions and expenditures because the fine "is small and one is not forced to lie."

"Many contributions are made on the condition that they are not reported and the law is impractical in requiring that all contributions, large or small, be reported," Monsod explained.

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FOR CLOSER UNITED NATIONS, ASEAN TIES
Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo (left) extends President Macapagal-Arroyo's and his own congratulations to new United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at UN Headquarters in New York. During their meeting, Ban lauded Ms Arroyo for the country's successful hosting and the "profound and meaningful success" of the Asean and East Asian Summits held recently in Cebu. Romulo and Ban agreed to work closely together, particularly on issues of common interest to Asean and the UN.

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DENR vows stricter monitoring of activities at La Mesa Dam

By Christine Gaylican

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY ANGELO Reyes said yesterday his department was strictly monitoring the areas surrounding the La Mesa Dam and Watershed area to prevent further deterioration of the water supply in Metro Manila.

Reyes's announcement followed apprehension over activities at the Bantay Kalikasan Foundation's La Mesa EcoPark and the housing project for employees of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

Leisure trips such as hiking, boating and camping in the EcoPark may be prohibited by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources if found to be harmful to the watershed, Reyes said.

Reyes conducted a press briefing following a recent study by the Marine Environment and Resources Foundation Inc. (MERF) of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute in Diliman, Quezon City.

MERF, which is funded by the New Zealand Agency for International Development, has declared that "the La Mesa Watershed Area is a critical and vulnerable resource" and current human activities are putting at risk its water quality and quantity.

Dr. Rhodora V. Azanza, a MERF scientist, said monitoring from June 2001 to August 2002 showed that park visitors had not disposed of trash properly and that some of them had even entered restricted areas.

"Human activities in the watershed and within the immediate vicinity of the reservoir can compromise the water quality of surface runoff, ground water and consequently the water in the reservoir," Azanza said, citing evidence of fecal contamination from humans and animals.

The La Mesa Ecopark is a collaborative development of the Quezon City government, MWSS and ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Kalikasan program.

"The Ecopark aims to promote the preservation of our endemic flora and fauna by providing opportunities where people can experience and enjoy nature's beauty. Hopefully, after visiting the ecopark and experiencing harmony with nature, our visitors learn to respect our environment and internalize this in their daily lives," the Bantay Kaliksan says on its website.

Reyes said his agency had no plans of shutting down the park until after consultations shall have been conducted.

"We recognize the effort of Bantay Kalikasan Foundation of the Lopez Group for starting a reforestation campaign. But other activities allowed at the park must be reviewed and regulated," he said.

The MERF study commissioned by the DENR also opposed the proposed residential area for MWSS employees on the upper slopes of the La Mesa watershed. The area would provide housing to 1,411 former employees of MWSS, increasing the number of households to 4,233.

Nation marks feast of Our Lady

PHILIPPINE CHRISTENDOM WILL CELEBRATE the feast day of Ina Poonbato on Jan. 24 with novenas and Masses to be offered in various churches nationwide spearheaded by the local Ina Poonbato chapter and devotees.

Rosellyn Magsaysay, president of Ina Poonbato Foundation, said the center of the celebration would be Botolan, Zambales, where the image traces its roots, as early as 1607 when the Recoletos arrived in Zambales.

The activities will start on Jan. 23 at the Ina Poonbato Pilgrim Chapel at the Loob-Bunga Resettlement Area where a novena-Mass will be officiated by Msgr. Cris Cacho at 4 p.m., followed by a program organized by the Rosary Rally Crusade for World Peace Movement also headed by Magsaysay.

Floral offerings to Ina Poonbato, known as the International Pilgrim Image, will be presented by the different Ina Poonbato chapters and their muses as well as devotees both here and abroad.

The representatives of each town will likewise join the floral offering organized by the Zambales-Zambaleña Inc.

Plaques of recognition and certificates of appreciation will be awarded to organizations which have been promoting the devotion to the Blessed Mother for the past 26 years by Msgr. Cacho and Magsaysay.

The vigil at the *bisperas* or prior the feast day will start at 9 p.m. with continuous prayers and recitation of the rosary to be led by the Ina Poonbato Foundation- Pasig and Pasay chapters, Zambaleña Inc. and the Couple for Christ Choir-Iba chapter. It will culminate at midnight with fireworks.

Bishops Florentino Lavarias of Iba likewise announced that its diocese will be observing the Marian celebration in relation to the silver jubilee of the diocese.

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Couple in scam deported from Canada

Suspects in fake investment scheme turned over to QC police

By Nikko Dizon

A FILIPINO COUPLE FACING charges of large scale estafa arrived last Sunday afternoon in Manila after being deported from Canada.

An airport authority report said that Kaye del Rosario arrived with his wife Janice and their children on board Cathay Pacific flight CX 919 which landed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

The Del Rosarios were accused of engaging in a so-called "pyramid" scam, defrauding their alleged victims—among them high-ranking police and military officials—of around P250 million.

Numerous complaints had been filed against them by Filipinos in Canada and "hundreds of their victims in Manila," the report added.

KAYE del Rosario (left) and wife Janice face the media following their deportation from Canada. The couple left the Philippines in 2003 after allegedly defrauding their victims of P250 million through a pyramid scam.

JOAN BONDOC

The couple allegedly fled to Canada in March 2003 to escape from their victims. Before that, they had opened a company, JDR Holdings, and encouraged other people, mostly from the Philippine National Police, to invest money in the firm. In return, the "investors" were promised monthly interest payments.

The Del Rosarios were turned over by the Canadian Immigration Task Force to the Bureau of Immigration at the Naia.

They were later taken into custody by policemen from the Quezon City Police District Station 6 led by Supt. Constante Agpaoa by virtue of separate warrants of arrest issued by QC Regional Trial Court (RTC) Judge Evelyn Corpus-Cabochan.

In a phone interview, Agpaoa told the INQUIRER that he was also victimized by the couple. He and 10 of his relatives lost P3 million to the Del Rosarios, he said.

Agpaoa said the couple's illegal activities were discovered in 2003. By then, they had allegedly defrauded their victims in the Philippine National Police of an estimated P250 million.

"Kaye worked as a waiter but they lived it up in Canada, driving a Mercedes Benz and a BMW," the police official added.

According to Agpaoa, Kaye was a former jail warden of the Quezon City jail who met his wife while she was serving a prison sentence for estafa.

The police officer added that he met Del Rosario through friends in the PNP.

Agpaoa said he also went to Canada to personally look for the Del Rosarios but came back to Manila empty-handed.

The couple was arrested by the Canadian police last week in Toronto.

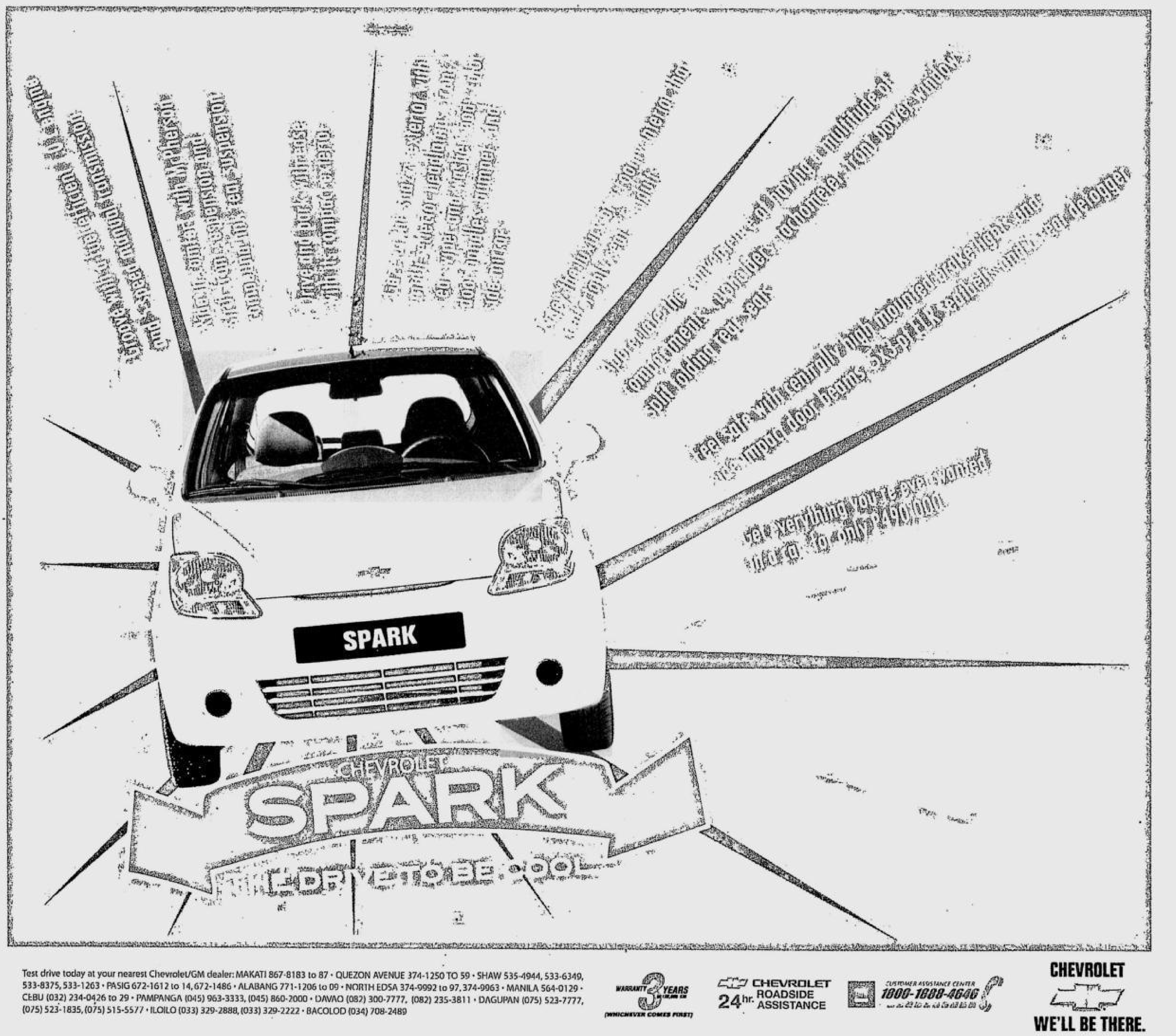
Agpaoa called on victims of the Del Rosarios to come forward and file cases against the couple.

With Miko L. Morelos

PARTY TIME

Youngsters dressed up in eye-catching costumes paraded on the streets of Makati last Sunday as the city celebrated the Caracol Festival, an annual event that is the financial capital's version of the Mardi Gras in Rio de Janeiro and New Orleans.

EDWIN BACASMAS



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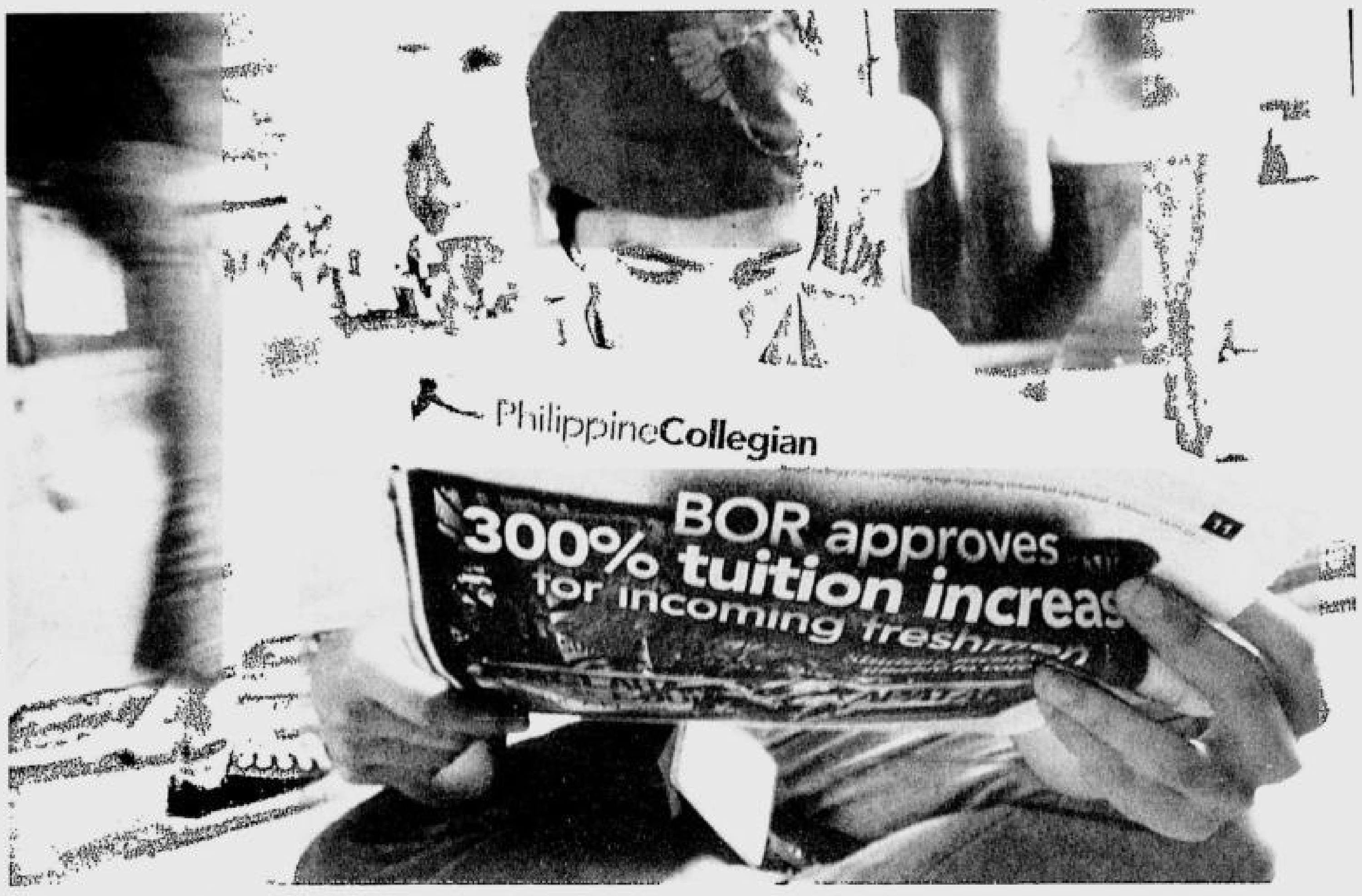
'Wowowee' victims march to claim 'unfulfilled' pledges


PhilippineCollegian
BOR approves 300% tuition increase for incoming freshmen

STILL RUNNING
A University of the Philippines student reads the initial issue for the year of the Philippine Collegian, student publication of the University of the Philippines. The UP administration has withheld funds for the paper since August following a standoff with Collegian staffers on the bidding process for printing, forcing the staff to borrow money to run the paper. RAFFY LERMA

By Tina G. Santos

FAMILIES OF VICTIMS OF THE Ultra tragedy yesterday went to the National Bureau of Investigation to complain against television network ABS-CBN's "71 Dreams Foundation," which they claimed had failed to fulfill its promises to them.

The "71 Dreams Foundation" was formed by the TV station which produces the daily game show, "Wowowee" to provide long-term assistance to families orphaned by the tragedy last February.

It was the first anniversary celebration of "Wowowee" that had drawn thousands of eager fans hoping to be allowed into the Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City for a chance to win thousands of pesos in a raffle.

But even before the show started, as the people were lining up to be admitted, a bottleneck at the entrance caused a stampede that resulted in the deaths of the 71 people and injuries to hundreds more.

Among the forms of assistance that the "71 Dreams Foundation" reportedly promised the families were educational assistance, employment, rice allowance, housing, medical assistance and livelihood, said Marc Magan, 37, a resident of Cavite.

Magan was among the 16 complainants who went to the NBI yesterday following a rally in front of the Supreme Court.

Magan, whose 58-year-old mother Trinidad was among those killed during the stampede, said the foundation did not make good on any of its promises.

"They said they would provide us with livelihood support but up to now, we haven't received any," he told INQUIRER in Filipino. "They also promised my brother a job but nothing came out of it."

"We were initially asked what we wanted (as livelihood assistance), but when some of us asked for a tricycle or a sari-sari store, the foundation claimed that it could not afford to grant any of those," another complainant claimed.

NBI National Capital Region chief Ruel Lasala said they could not do anything about the complainants' claims as a case had already been filed against the TV network.

Lasala added that the livelihood support reportedly promised to the complainants was only voluntary on the part of the foundation.

In March 2006, the NBI filed charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide and multiple physical injuries charges against top executives of ABS-CBN.

GMA 7 seeks court order vs ratings firm to prevent service suspension

By DJ Yap

TELEVISION NETWORK GMA 7 has sought a court order blocking ratings firm AGB Nielsen Media Research Inc. from cutting off its service to the station in the middle of negotiations for the renewal of their contract.

The petition for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction was filed in the sala of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 92 Judge Samuel Gaerlan.

The research agency earlier threatened to stop supplying GMA 7 with its weekly and daily ratings beginning Jan. 19, unless the TV network agreed to a year-long service contract, as opposed to the two-month extension GMA 7 said it had requested.

The TV station responded by filing a P2.5-million suit against AGB Nielsen for "acting in bad faith and abusing its right in negotiating with GMA for the extension of the service agreement" between the two parties.

Last week, Executive Judge Romeo Zamora of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the research firm.

The TRO, which was effective for 72 hours starting Jan. 18, stopped AGB Nielsen from cutting off its services to GMA 7.

In an e-mail sent to AGB Nielsen on Dec. 7, 2006, the TV station had indicated its intention to continue its subscription to AGB-Nielsen's Mega Manila ratings service until February, and its Luzon ratings data service from January-February.

But in an e-mail reply on Dec. 13, AGB Nielsen's Maya Reforma replied that the minimum contract for subscription to the National Urban TV Audience Measurements Service was for one year.

GMA 7 followed up on its proposal to extend the service agreement by two months on Jan. 9, but in a reply dated Jan. 11, Reforma said they could not agree to such an arrangement.

Sheila Tan, vice president of GMA 7's research department, said it was "common usage and practice" between GMA 7 and AGB Nielsen for the latter to continue to supply their ratings even before the two had reached an agreement for a contract renewal.

She cited instances in which the two media entities arrived at a service contract only after AGB Nielsen had already provided the service.

"AGB Nielsen is well aware that the delivery of the aforesaid data on TV audience measurements is vital to the business operations of GMA because TV advertisers rely on audience ratings ... in deciding where to place their commercial ads," she said.

Tan added that if AGB Nielsen were to cut off its service to GMA 7, the TV station would be "kept in the dark as to the performance of its programs, while its competitor ABS-CBN will continue to enjoy the services of the defendant ..."

Contacted for comment, an AGB Nielsen officer said Reforma was the only one authorized to speak for the company, but was unable to do so as she is out of the country.

NBI undertakes own investigation of slain judge

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INvestigation has stepped into the killing of Judge Nathaniel Pattugalan who was shot dead by two men on board a motorcycle Friday at the Elliptical Road in Quezon City.

"We are doing a parallel investigation of the incident," NBI Special Task Force chief Arnel Dalumpines told reporters yesterday. "We will review the cases he handled to determine if the killing was work-related." he added.

Pattugalan, the acting presiding judge of Quezon City Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 35, had been assigned previously to the Baggao Metropolitan Trial Court in Cagayan province.

In October 2005, several armed men fired on his vehicle in Masical town. His driver was killed instantly while the judge was able to fire back at his attackers. Pattugalan then brought himself to a hospital to have his gunshot wounds treated.

The incident, however, prompted the judge to ask the Supreme Court to assign him to another post, preferably in Manila.

Last Friday, Pattugalan boarded a passenger jeep in front of the Quezon City Hall at around 6 p.m.

Two men on board a motorcycle moved up to the vehicle and fired at the judge who was seated beside the driver.

Pattugalan was hit in the chest, the bullet piercing his heart.

Dalumpines said Pattugalan's widow, Anastacia, will coordinate the investigation work with the NBI after her husband's funeral this week.

He added that agents-on-case will interview witnesses and relatives of the victim to shed light on the incident.

Makati City's 'Caracol' regales Sunday crowd

By Tarra Quismundo

MOST ROADS IN THE COUNTRY'S financial capital are usually quiet and free of traffic on weekends.

Last Sunday, however, was an exception as Makati celebrated its 21st Caracol Festival, the city's version of New Orlean's and Rio de Janeiro's colorful Mardi Gras.

For over three hours, youngsters dressed up as lobsters, fish, tigers, birds, flowers, trees and fairies paraded around the Ayala Center bus terminal which was turned into a fair ground.

They were joined by representatives of the city's barangays and the staff of top hotels in the area.

Brightly-costumed dancers eager to display dance routines they had tirelessly rehearsed made up the procession.

Tourists danced with Ati-atihan bands and even joined the crowds who scrambled for candies thrown to the crowd by participants.

Others were content to take snapshots of the festivity, among the several parades that take place in the financial hub every year.

The parade was followed by several numbers prepared by different groups from Makati's universities and elementary and high schools.

Caracol, an annual festival that began in 1986, signals the start of the cultural calendar for Makati City, setting the festive mood for other yearly events like the month-long foundation anniversary celebration and the Makati New Year's Eve Countdown.

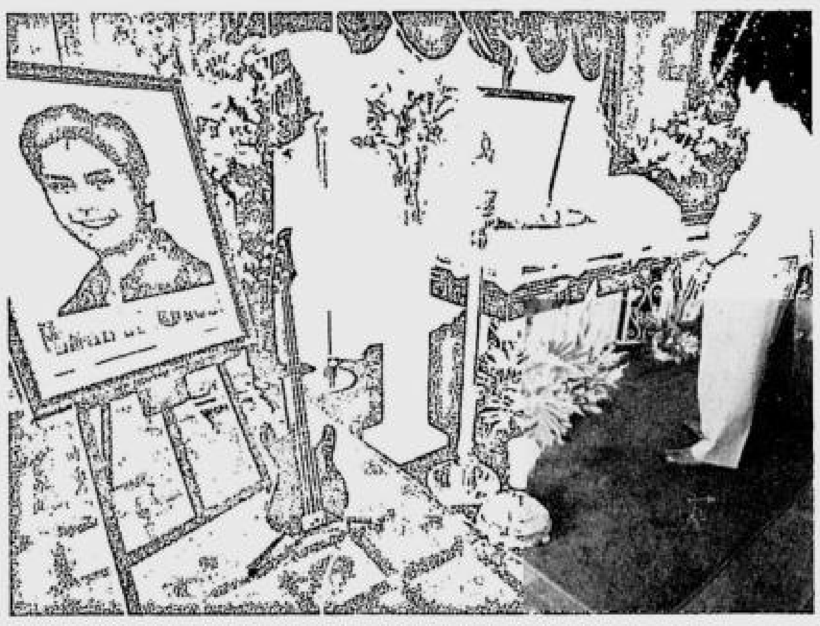
Declared Makati's official festival in 1986, the annual festival is a combination of three of the country's major ethnic festivals.

DID YOU KNOW

THE EDSA Shrine (also known as Mary, Queen of Peace Shrine and Our Lady of Peace Quasi-Parish) at the corner of Edsa and Ortigas Avenue, was the brainchild of the late Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, who thought it fitting to build a shrine of Our Lady of Peace on a spot where civilians offered flowers to soldiers during the first People Power. The shrine was consecrated in December 1989. Its first rector, then Msgr. Socrates Villegas, recalled that his first Mass at the Shrine had only one attendee.

The number of Mass goers has since grown.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research



GRIEVING FATHER
Roberto Pagdanganan, Philippine International Trading Corp. chair and former Bulacan governor, grieves over the death of his son Raymond, 26, who died Sunday morning in a car accident. The wake is at the Sta. Maria della Strada church on Katipunan Road, Quezon City. RAFFY LERMA

200 new buses to replace 'running coffins' unveiled

By Riza T. Olchondra

TWO HUNDRED BUSES THAT would replace old models—described by motorists and commuters as "running coffins"—in Metro Manila and other areas in Luzon were unveiled at the SM Mall of Asia yesterday under the bus modernization program of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

"These are Euro1- and Euro2-standard buses," LTFRB chair and Transportation and Communication spokesperson Thompson Lantion told reporters.

"These buses will help protect the riding public from road accidents," he added.

Operators' initiative

Lantion said bus operators took the initiative to buy the new buses in support of the bus modernization program spearheaded by LTFRB and LTO.

Among the groups that participated in the program were the Integrated Metro Manila Bus Operators Association, Metro Manila Bus Operators Association and the Northeast Manila Bus Operators.

Lantion also assured the riding public that the 200 new buses will not be simply added to the 3,900 buses already plying the streets of Metro Manila.

Instead, the new buses will replace some of the oldest vehicles under the transportation department's bus modernization program.

The LTFRB had already issued last year a memorandum circular allowing bus operators to use existing franchises for new buses to be deployed in place of old ones.

"After a series of consultation meetings and public hearings with Metro Manila public utility bus operators, the LTFRB resolved to lift the moratorium on dropping and substitution, on the condition that substitute units are brand new, not refurbished, rebuilt, or remanufactured," the circular said.

EDWIN BACASMAS

ARENAS: Still smiling.

Ex-cop nabbed for drug cases

By Julie M. Aurelio

A FORMER POLICEMAN LONG wanted for his alleged involvement in illegal drug activities was arrested late last week in Parañaque City.

Dennis Arenas was presented to the media yesterday at the Southern Police District headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Arenas, 38, was arrested by operatives of the SPD Anti-Illegal Drugs Operation Task Force on Jan. 18 on Quirino Avenue in Barangay San Dionisio.

Senior Supt. Jaime Calungsod Jr . told reporters that they found 2.9 grams of shabu estimated to be worth P5,800 on the former policeman. Also recovered from him was P10,000 in cash and suspected drug paraphernalia.

Arrested with Arenas was Artie de la Cruz, 55. Three of their companions, however, managed to escape.

Arenas had long been suspected of peddling illegal drugs based on tips received by the police through the Philippine National Police text hotline.

Four other suspects—Randy Solibel, Nestor San Diego, Tato Napi Abas and Haidja Coronel—suspected of peddling shabu were also presented to media yesterday. They were arrested by anti-illegal drug agents in Taguig City.

Breakthrough in Korea talks close, says report

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—NORTH Korea and the United States came close to agreement last week that the communist state freeze its nuclear activity and allow international monitoring in exchange for aid, a news report said Monday.

The potential movement toward a breakthrough came during talks in Berlin last week between the North's nuclear envoy, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, and his US counterpart, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, South Korea's Chosun Ilbo newspaper reported, citing unidentified officials in Seoul and Beijing.

Kim offered to halt the operation of the five-megawatt reactor at the North's main nuclear complex and other nuclear activity while allowing monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency as first steps toward dismantling its nuclear programs, the paper said.

In return, Kim demanded that the United States provide the impoverished North with economic and energy aid and show "sincerity" in efforts to resolve a dispute over Washington's imposition of financial restrictions against Pyongyang, the report said.

Hill responded positively to Kim's request for aid, the paper said.

It did not say how the US diplomat reacted to the North's request over the financial dispute, but said the US is expected to negotiate how to relax the restrictions in financial talks with the North expected this week.

South Korean Foreign Minister Song Min-soon declined to confirm the report, but said the Berlin talks broadly touched upon the financial issue.

Song also told YTN television that the US and the North have the willingness to resolve the row in a way that "fulfills each other's needs." He didn't elaborate.

The financial row was the main sticking point that deadlocked last month's six-party nuclear talks involving China, Japan, Russia, the United States and the two Koreas, the first such session since the North's nuclear test in October.

A date has not been set for the resumption of the international nuclear talks, but Hill said after the Berlin meetings that the sides agreed to meet as soon as possible.

South Korea's nuclear envoy, Chun Yung-woo, left Monday for Beijing on a two-day trip for talks with his Chinese counterpart. Chun plans to meet Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei later Monday, according to a Foreign Ministry official who spoke on customary condition of anonymity citing policy.

Song, the South's foreign minister, said Chun's discussion with Wu will be about when to resume the nuclear negotiations and how to make progress when they reopen.

Song also indicated that Chun could meet his North Korean counterpart Kim, who reportedly arrived in Beijing Monday for talks with the Chinese side.

"Chief envoys to the six-party talks can meet at anytime and anywhere if they deem it necessary," he said. *AP*

Turkish teen admits killing journalist

ISTANBUL—A 17-YEAR-OLD prime suspect in the killing of Turkish journalist Hrant Dink, one of his country's most prominent ethnic Armenians, has confessed to the murder, a prosecutor said Sunday.

"He admitted he committed the murder" in his preliminary interrogation in the Black Sea port of Samsun, where he was arrested overnight, the city's chief prosecutor Ahmet Gokcinar told Anatolia news agency.

The suspect, Ogun Samast, reportedly said he shot Dink because the journalist insulted the Turkish nation.

"I shot him after saying the Friday prayers. I'm not sorry," the CNN Turk news channel quoted him as saying in his testimony. "I read news on the Internet. He said: 'I'm from Turkey but Turkish blood is dirty' and that's why I decided to kill him." Dink, 53, was one of the taboo-breaking critics of the official line on the massacre of Armenians in 1915-17 under the Ottoman Empire, which he labeled as genocide, and was last year given a suspended six-month jail sentence for insulting "Turkishness."

Nationalists had branded him a "traitor" and Dink wrote in recent articles in his bilingual Turkish-Armenian weekly Agos that he received threats.

Samast, a jobless secondary school graduate reportedly involved with nationalist groups, was detained on board a bus in Samsun, while he was returning from Istanbul to his northeastern hometown of Trabzon on the Black Sea.

He was still carrying the gun he allegedly used to shoot Dink three times in the head and the neck outside the Agos office in downtown Istanbul Friday afternoon, officials said.

The boy, flown to Istanbul Sunday, was arrested with the help of his father, who tipped off the police after the authorities released pictures of his son caught on the security camera of a bank near the scene of the murder. *AFP*

Harsher punishment for school bullies backed

TOKYO—STRONGER MEASURES should be taken to punish school bullies, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Monday, amid reports of more than a dozen student suicides linked to bullying over the past six years.

Abe said he supported punishments such as suspension for children found to be involved in bullying others, and added that they should also be given counseling.

"We need to restore the confidence of parents and children in the schools and classrooms," he told reporters. "Measures such as suspension for instructive guidance are part of education and it is natural to provide follow-up care."

Bullying was a factor in the suicides of at least 14 young people over the six years ending in 2005, Japan's government said last week. After previously denying that there were any such cases, the Education Ministry has now determined that bullying was involved in at least 14 of 40 cases of youth suicides in 1999-2005.

Bullying was the main cause for the suicides in three of those cases, and a significant factor in another six. Bullying was also involved in the remaining five cases, but the ministry could not fully determine to what extent it had played a part in the suicides.

Last November, a Japanese government panel chaired by Nobel laureate Ryoji Noyori, a chemist, urged schools to punish classroom bullies and crack down on teachers who looked the other way. Around that time, the Education Ministry also received dozens of anonymous letters threatening suicide, believed to have been sent by students. *AP*

Heavy workouts may weaken heart muscles, say researchers

CHICAGO—MOST ATHLETES PAY A PHYSICAL price for their love of the sport, but the ones who engage in endurance sports may be pushing their bodies to the brink of heart failure, according to a study released Sunday.

The physical wear and tear of years of heavy-duty workouts appear to weaken the heart muscle predisposing an athlete to a rare, but potentially deadly, condition called ventricular arrhythmia in which the heart beats erratically.

"There may be a limit to how much exercise the heart can tolerate," said Professor Hein Heidbuchel, a cardiologist at the University of Leuven in Belgium, and the author of the paper.

Researchers have known for some time that high-level athletes, like the cyclists who compete in the Tour de France, are susceptible to ventricular arrhythmia. What they didn't know was whether the irregular heartbeats were a result of a genetic flaw, or the product of over-training.

In this study, Heidbuchel and his team examined the heart function of a group of 22 athletes with ventricular arrhythmia, and compared it to the heart function of 15 healthy endurance athletes and a control group of 10 nonathletes.

Most of the athletes were cyclists, with a handful of runners, kayakers and footballers thrown in. All were Dutch and Belgian men aged 18 to 55.

The tests showed that in 18 of the 22 sportsmen with the heart problem, the irregular heartbeat originated in the right chamber or ventricle of the heart. Moreover, the structural weakness resulted in their hearts pumping less blood out of the right chamber than was the case in the healthier athletes.

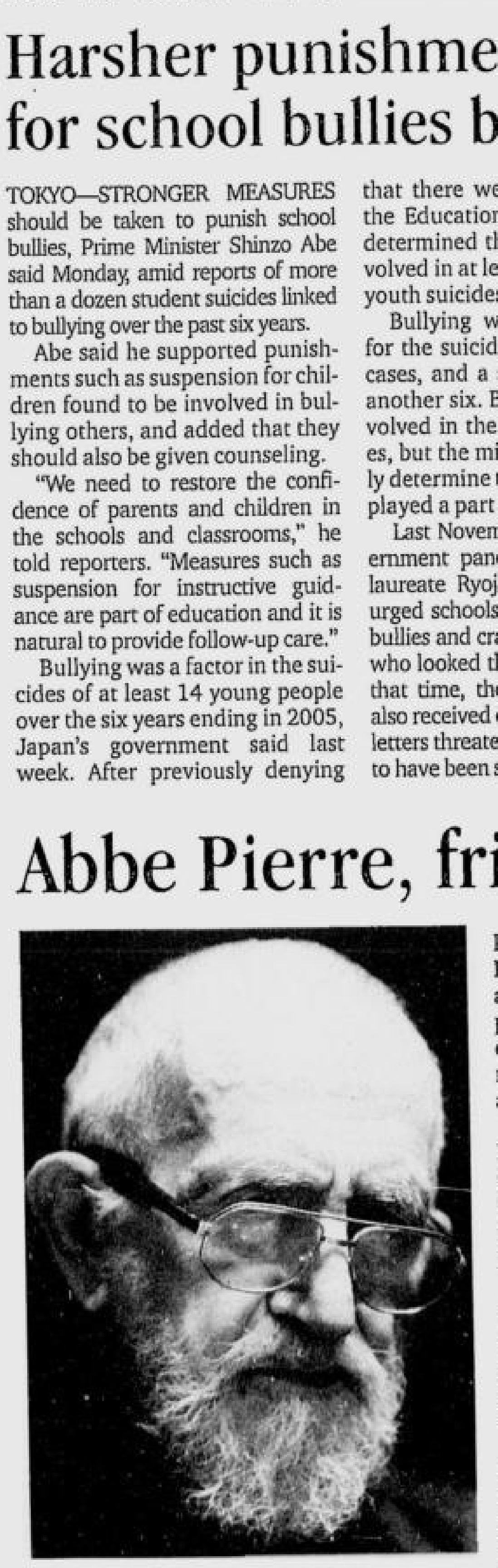
Heidbuchel said further research is needed to rule out genetics as a factor, but the findings bolster the theory that the physical stress of high-level endurance exercise can damage the right chamber of the heart disrupting normal heart rate and rhythm.

"Lifelong endurance training may lead to heart disturbances, particularly in young male athletes," he said.

Heidbuchel said that while the condition is rare, athletes should watch out for the warning signs, such as a sudden shortness of breath during exercise, or brief blackouts, and seek out the proper testing, he said.

And he cautioned that this kind of heart damage is probably irreversible, and a positive diagnosis is essentially a career-ending proposition. *AFP*

Abbe Pierre, friend of homeless; 94



PIERRE AFP

PARIS—ABBE PIERRE, A Roman Catholic priest who abandoned wealth to campaign for the homeless and became one of France's most-revered men, died on Monday aged 94.

His death was announced by French President Jacques Chirac who said France had lost "an immense figure, a conscience, a man who personified goodness."

Abbe Pierre was taken to Paris a military hospital earlier this month suffering from bronchitis and died at 5:25 a.m. on Monday after failing to recover from the lung infection.

The frail Roman Catholic priest, who spent most of his life protecting people dumped on the margins of Western society, was little known outside his own country but was cherished at home as a modern-day saint.

Abbe Pierre—"abbe" is a traditional title for priests—worked with the French Resistance in World War Two and began campaigning for the homeless in 1949. His Emmaus chain of hostels for them is spread across 38 countries.

His militant stance in favor of the poor kept Abbe Pierre, a national icon in his trademark black cape, beret and walking stick, consistently ahead of entertainers and politicians in popularity polls.

Born in 1912, Henri-Antoine Groues was the fifth child of a Lyon silk merchant but gave up his wealth to become a monk.

"Abbe Pierre represented the spirit of rebellion against misery, suffering, injustice and the strength of solidarity," Chirac's statement said. *Reuters*

FORMER Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary celebrate his victory in the Democratic runoff in Little Rock, Ark. in this June 8, 1982 photo. The Arkansas years, with Bill Clinton serving first as state attorney general, and later as governor, initiated presidential contender Hillary's education to life as a political spouse. She practiced law, became a mother, worked as an advocate for women and children. AP

Wanted: $100M to fund a presidential campaign

By Stephanie Griffith

WASHINGTON—THE RAPIDLY EXPANDING field of 2008 presidential contenders has set off a frenzied battle for all-important campaign donations, as the money-driven US election contest gathers steam.

The 2004 presidential election broke spending records, but the current campaign is expected to eclipse that one, according to federal election officials.

"The 2008 race will be the longest and most expensive election in American history," former Federal Election Commission chair Michael Toner told reporters recently.

Toner said campaign spending would likely approach the $1 billion mark in 2008, despite various attempts to clamp down on expenditures.

US election authorities say that top-tier presidential candidates like Democrats Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and Bill Richardson and Republican Sam Brownback—all of whom entered the race just this past week—likely will need to raise a daunting $100 million by year's end to launch credible campaigns.

The quest for money has driven campaign decisions more than ever before. Most serious candidates kick off their campaigns by announcing the formation of a presidential exploratory committee, allowing them to get a jump start on fundraising.

Sen. Hillary Clinton, who entered the race for the Democratic nomination Saturday, is a prodigious fundraiser with a proven track record whose name recognition is expected to help enormously in her quest for funds.

Clinton faced only token opposition during her Senate reelection campaign, and has some $14 million already in the bank which she can apply directly to her presidential campaign.

Still, she will need many times that to pay a campaign staff, travel, national television ads and other expenses. The timing of her decision to join the race was believed to have been influenced in part by a desire not to lose ground to Obama, a top rival for the Democratic presidential nomination and campaign funds.

Obama, as one of his very first tasks after his announcement this week, made conference calls to various deep-pocketed donors for financial support.

He already has attracted an influential group of financial backers. Past supporters to his political action committee include billionaire investor Warren Buffett and Hollywood moguls Jeffrey Katzenberg, David Geffen and Steven Spielberg.

Former New York mayor and 2008 Republican presidential hopeful Rudolph Giuliani inadvertently revealed just how all-encompassing the quest for election funds can be, when detailed plans of his White House strategy were revealed after being lost in a New York hotel.

Giuliani's election dossier laid out an ambitious fundraising schedule, with plans to raise $100-125 million this year at 250 different gatherings with wealthy donors across the United States.

Meanwhile, the New York Times reported Sunday that billionaire philanthropist George Soros—who has given money to both Clinton's and Obama's senatorial campaigns—sent the maximum donation of $2,100 to the Illinois senator—which may be a sign that he is casting his lot with Obama over Clinton.

"Soros believes that Senator Obama brings a new energy to the political system and has the potential to be a transformational leader," Michael Vachon, a Soros spokesperson, told the New York Times.

The quest for campaign funds also drove the 2004 campaigns of candidates President George W. Bush and Democratic nominee John Kerry, who decided to forego public matching funds during the nominating phase of the campaign because that money came with a $45 million spending limit. *AFP*

Two-thirds think America headed down wrong track

WASHINGTON—AMERICANS SEEM sour on the state of the union in advance of President George W. Bush's address on the subject. A poll finds most believe the US is on the wrong track—a complete flip from five years ago.

Most people also are not confident that Bush and the Democrats, who now control Congress and share responsibility with him for running the country, can work together to solve its problems, an Associated Press-AOL News poll finds.

At the same time, Americans see the president as likable, decisive and strong—but also stubborn. And only a minority think he is honest—44 percent, down from 53 percent two years ago.

Bush delivers his State of the Union address Tuesday night, nearly two weeks after he told the nation he is sending 21,500 additional US troops to Iraq in a new effort to end violence there.

The White House says the speech will focus on a few issues, energy and health care among them, on which Bush might be able to reach agreement with Democrats, who control the House and Senate for the first time during his two-term presidency.

Two-thirds of Americans, 66 percent, think the US is on the wrong track. That is about the same as a year ago, when 65 percent thought so, the poll found. *AP*

China silence on missile alarms US

WASHINGTON—BUSH ADMINISTRATION officials said that they had been unable to get even the most basic diplomatic response from China after their detection of a successful test to destroy a satellite 10 days ago, and that they were uncertain whether China's top leaders, including President Hu Jintao, were fully aware of the test or the reaction it would engender.

In interviews over the past two days, American officials with access to the intelligence on the test said that the United States kept mum about the antisatellite test in hopes that China would come forth with an explanation.

It was more than a week before the intelligence leaked out: A Chinese missile had been launched and an aging weather satellite in its path, more than 500 miles above the Earth, had been reduced to rubble. But protests filed by the United States, Japan, Canada and Australia, among others, were met with silence—and quizzical looks from officials in China's Foreign Ministry, who seemed to be caught unaware.

The mysteries surrounding China's silence are reminiscent of the Cold War, when every case of muscle-flexing by competing powers was examined for evidence of a deeper agenda.

The American officials presume that Hu was generally aware of the missile testing program, but speculate that he may not have known the timing of the test. China's continuing silence would appear to suggest, at a minimum, that Hu did not anticipate a strong international reaction, either because he had not fully prepared for the possibility that the test would succeed, or because he did not foresee that American intelligence on it would be shared with allies, or leaked.

In an interview late on Friday, Stephen J. Hadley, President Bush's national security adviser, raised the possibility that China's leaders might not have fully known what their military was doing.

"The question on something like this is, at what level in the Chinese government are people witting, and have they approved?" Hadley asked. He suggested that the diplomatic protests were intended, in part, to force Hu to give some clue about China's intentions.

The threat to US interests is clear: The test demonstrated that China could destroy American spy satellites in low-Earth orbit (the very satellites that picked up the destruction of the Chinese weather satellite). *NYT*

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

Ichimaru, an 18-year-old *maiko* or young geisha, works her computer at a Kyoto teahouse where she has been keeping what is believed to be the first Internet blog by an apprentice geisha, Dec. 7. Facing growing competition from nightclubs and karaoke bars, Kyoto's geisha are forced to adapt to survive. AFP

China: Vatican overture a 'step forward'

BEIJING—CHINA'S STATE-BACKED CATHOLIC Church on Monday welcomed an olive branch for dialogue extended by the Vatican over the weekend, saying it was a "step forward."

Rome issued a statement on Saturday after a two-day meeting on China, whose communist government severed diplomatic relations with the Holy See after taking power in 1949, calling for "respectful and constructive dialogue" to normalize ties.

"The statement is favorable for improving ties," Liu Bainian, vice chair of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, said. "I am more optimistic than before."

The Vatican is one of some 20 countries that have diplomatic ties with Taiwan, which split from China in 1949.

Beijing regards the self-governed island as a renegade province.

About half of China's 10 million or more Catholics belong to an "underground" church directly loyal to the Vatican despite the atheist government's opposition and regular detentions of priests and bishops.

The remainder worship in the state-sanctioned church, which respects the Pope's spiritual authority but rejects his administrative and political role.

Liu said the fact the Vatican's statement acknowledged the growth of the Chinese Catholic community showed that it realized there was religious freedom in the country.

"They stressed lack of freedom in the past," said Liu, who is the government church's most public face.

But Cardinal Joseph Zen, the head of Hong Kong's Catholic diocese and a Vatican adviser on Chinese affairs, said the Vatican's statement did not represent a change of position.

"We are not surrendering and our stance has not changed," the South China Morning Post quoted Zen as saying.

The Vatican intended to set up a commission to handle relations with China, though details of the body envisioned had yet to be announced, Zen added.

Hopes for rapprochement between China and the Vatican were dented last year when the official church consecrated new bishops without papal approval, which the Vatican denounced as a serious act that subverted the church's fundamental principles.

Liu repeated China's defense that the absence of ties made "normal communication" impossible and it needed the "independent selection and consecration" of bishops to spread the gospel. *Reuters*

Ultranationalists claim victory in Serb election

BELGRADE—SERBIA'S ULTRA-nationalist Radical Party claimed victory in national elections on Sunday, in a voter rejection of Western appeals for closer cooperation on the arrest of war criminals and on Kosovo.

A projection of the result showed the opposition Radicals, strongest party in Serbia for years, taking 28 percent of the vote, a point higher than the 2003 national elections.

"The Radical Party has won these elections," said Tomislav Nikolic, the Radical's candidate for prime minister in the absence of party leader Vojislav Seselj, who is on trial for war crimes at the UN tribunal in The Hague.

His only regret was the Radicals did not win 50 percent.

"That spoils our celebration tonight because we're convinced that hard days lie ahead for Serbia," said Nikolic. "Until the Radicals form a government, things will be tough for Serbia."

Western capitals worried about Serbia's future course could take heart in the fact the pro-Western opposition Democratic Party of President Boris Tadic nearly doubled its share of the vote, at 23 percent.

The projection from Serbian electoral commission, based on actual results counted, showed neither of the two parties had enough votes for a parliamentary majority.

Outgoing Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) was seen as having 17 percent of the vote.

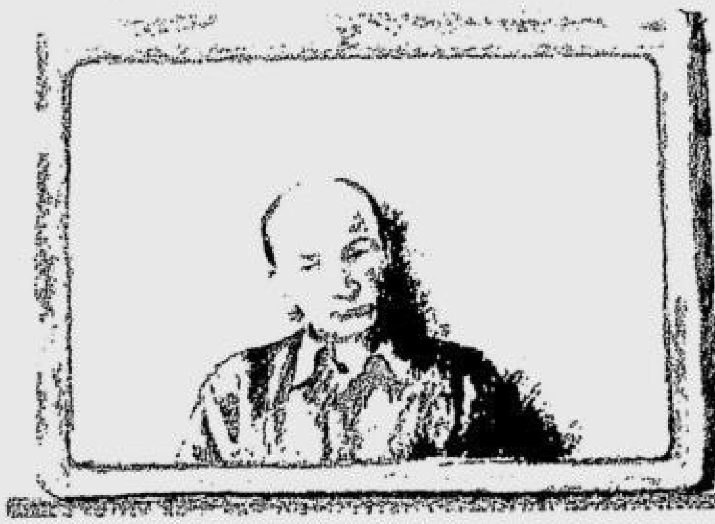
Kostunica courted the nationalist vote in his campaign and has not ruled out allying with the Radicals if he ends up kingmaker.

A coalition of their two parties would have a slim majority in the 250-seat parliament. A DSS coalition with the Democrats would need the liberal G17 party to form a majority.

"Coalition talks are ahead of us," Kostunica told reporters. "We are open, we expect other parties to be responsible."

The West made clear to Serbs before the elections that they should turn their backs on nationalism if they hoped to join the European Union and Nato, and make up for a decade of isolation, war and sanctions under late leader Slobodan Milosevic.

Kosovo has been run by the United Nations and patrolled by Nato since 1999 when Western powers bombed Serbia to drive out Milosevic's troops, accused of killing civilians while fighting an insurgency. *Reuters*



PICKTON, charged with the deaths of 26 women, in a May 2005 artist's drawing in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. AP

Canada's largest-ever murder trial starts

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA—JURORS who begin hearing evidence Monday against a pig farmer accused of being Canada's worst serial killer have been warned by the judge to expect testimony "as bad as a horror movie."

Robert William Pickton is charged with the deaths of 26 women, mostly prostitutes and drug addicts who vanished from Vancouver's impoverished Downtown Eastside neighborhood in the 1990s.

He is accused of luring women to his family's 7-hectare pig farm outside Vancouver, where investigators say he threw drunken raves with prostitutes and plenty of drugs. After his arrest in February 2002, health officials issued a tainted meat advisory to neighbors who may have bought pork from his farm, concerned that it may have contained human remains.

Pickton, 56, will first be tried for six of the deaths and has pleaded not guilty to each. British Columbia Supreme Court Justice James Williams decided that the other charges would be heard in a later trial to avoid overburdening the jury.

After Pickton was arrested and the first traces of DNA of some missing women were allegedly found on the farm, the buildings were razed and the province spent an estimated $61 million to sift through hectares of soil at the farm.

Among the women Pickton is accused of killing is Sarah de Vries, a prostitute who disappeared in 1998 when she was 28. A 1995 entry in her diary revealed she feared for her life after women began disappearing in downtown Vancouver.

"Am I next?" she wrote. "Is he watching me now? Is he stalking me like a predator and his prey? Waiting, waiting for some perfect spot, time or my stupid mistake."

Evidence has been so gruesome that some journalists covering the preliminary hearing have sought psychological counseling. During jury selection last month, Williams warned the potential jurors about what to expect.

"I think this trial might expose the juror to something that might be as bad as a horror movie and you don't have the option of turning off the TV," he said as he excused one juror. *AP*

For 1st time, explorers reach Antarctica's center on foot

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—A TEAM OF BRITISH and Canadian explorers endured seven weeks of howling winds and subzero temperatures to become the first expedition to reach the geographic center of Antarctica on foot.

Dragging 120-kg sleds, the team traveled more than 1,700 km on foot or by kite ski to reach Antarctica's Point of Inaccessibility—the furthest point from any ocean—on Jan. 19, according to a statement posted on the expedition's Web site.

Located more than 3,725 m above sea level, the Point of Inaccessibility was first visited in 1958 by Soviet explorers who reached the remote outpost in convoy of snow vehicles.

The team—led by Canadian Paul Landry—said it was surprised to find a bust of Vladimir Lenin erected by the Soviets nearly half a century ago still standing amid the ice.

"We noticed a black dot on the horizon—as we got closer an outline of (the) bust started to appear—we could not believe it," the team said in a brief statement posted on Jan. 19. "We are all so exhausted that we have only just put up the tent with Lenin's stern gaze over us!"

The team, called N2i, also includes Britons Rupert Longsdon, Rory Sweet and Henry Cookson.

The three Britons won the 2005 Polar Challenge, a competitive 350-mile race to the North Pole, with no Arctic experience. They then hired Landry, veteran polar explorer who has led numerous Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, to guide them to the former Soviet base.

It took the group 49 days to complete their journey from the Russian scientific base Novolazarevskaya, located on the Antarctic coast north-northwest of the Pole of Inaccessibility. They will now fly to another Russian base, Vostok, before traveling on to Cape Town, South Africa.

The Pole of Inaccessibility lies some 870 km northeast of the South Pole. It was first reached by Soviet explorers on Dec. 14, 1958, and was used briefly as a meteorological research base.

The area was last visited by a six-man French team, which passed through the Pole of Inaccessibility on a trans-Antarctic expedition supported by dog sleds in 1989-90, according to the Australian Antarctic Division. *AP*

Major quake off Indonesia

JAKARTA—A MAJOR 6.5-MAGnitude undersea earthquake rocked Indonesia's northern Sulawesi province Sunday, the country's meteorology agency said, but there were no immediate reports of any casualties or serious damage.

The earthquake struck at 7:27 p.m. and was centered some 50 km under the sea, 160 km southeast of the North Sulawesi capital of Manado, Arif from the meteorology agency in Jakarta, said.

"So far we have had no report of casualties or serious damage," said Bagyo, also from the meteorology agency.

He said five aftershocks followed within one hour of the initial quake.

The strongest, a 5.5-magnitude quake, struck 18 minutes after the initial shock. A second aftershock had a magnitude of 5.1 and struck 17 minutes later.

Another strong quake, of magnitude 6.1, hit the area at 1:32 a.m., the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, but there was also no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

The latest quake, which struck 10 km under the sea, hit 123 km northwest of Ternate, on the Moluccas islands, according to the USGS.

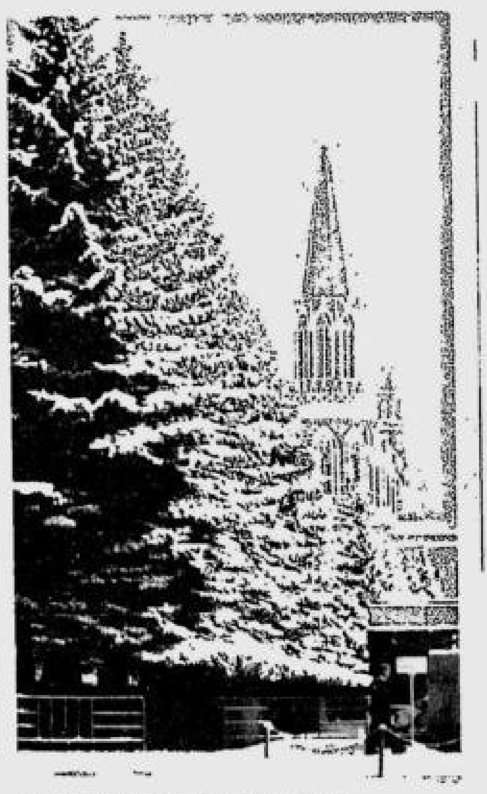
After the first series of quakes, the agency said there was no risk of a tsunami after earlier warning that it was a possibility.

"After one hour we called the port authority in Manado and there was no rise in sea level. Therefore we cancel the possibility of tsunami taking place," said Arif.

Hendarso, an officer at the National Disaster Coordination Center, said no serious casualties and only superficial damage were reported in Manado.

The Indonesian archipelago sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire, where continental plates meet, causing frequent seismic and volcanic activity.

Indonesia was the nation worst hit by the earthquake-triggered Asian tsunami in December 2004, which killed some 168,000 people in Aceh province. *AFP*



SNOW IN RED SQUARE

This year's first snow covered Moscow on Sunday after a winter that has so far been the warmest since records began in 1879. REUTERS

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SPORTS

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

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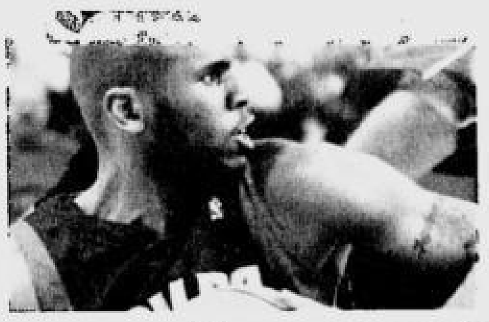
WHAT'S INSIDE

War among four teams in PBL/A22

Paraguay rules World Cup /A24

Mavs gain revenge against Miami Heat /A24



BAP chair, Alcoseba to join SBP

By June Navarro

TWO KEY OFFICIALS OF THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIAtion of the Philippines are ready to jump on the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas bandwagon for the sake of unity among the sport's major stakeholders.

BAP chair Michele Lhuillier and BAP vice president for the Visayas Yayoy Alcoseba met with SBP officials Manny V. Pangilinan and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada before the two left for a meeting with top international basketball federation (Fiba) officials in Geneva, Switzerland.

Pangilinan and Estrada, president and chair of SBP respectively, sought to convince the Fiba to lift its suspension on the country. They were joined in the trip by PBA chair Ricky Vargas, league commissioner Noli Eala and PLDT executive Al Panlilio.

Alcoseba, also the BAP director for Region VII, said he and Lhuillier would shift their allegiance if the SBP could provide a better option than what the BAP had offered, as far as development of the sport in their region is concerned.

"Would it help lift the (Fiba) suspension if we join the SBP? If it would, then we'll do it," said Alcoseba who, along with Lhuillier, are the prime movers of the Mindanao-Visayas Basketball Association, the region's version of the Philippine Basketball League.

"At the same time, we want to know what programs the SBP could offer our region."

After meeting with SBP officials last week, Alcoseba and Lhuillier were told that discussions on the plans of the new basketball organization would resume as soon as Pangilinan, Vargas and Eala returned from Geneva.

The three were expected to arrive last night. Estrada returned Sunday night.

A source close to Pangilinan and Vargas said that the meeting with Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann and Fiba president Bob Elphinston "ended on a very positive note."

The source said that the group was asked to proceed with the Unity Congress, which the SBP had set for Feb. 5, before the Fiba could act on the SBP bid for recognition as the country's new basketball federation.

The congress is one of the final requirements in the communique signed by BAP and Pilipinas Basketball representatives and witnessed by Baumann in Tokyo last September.

"Frankly speaking, we would support the SBP if they (SBP officials) could guarantee the lifting of the suspension," Alcoseba told the INQUIRER.

"We want this problem to end so we could go on with our programs."

TWO FOR BASKETBALL UNITY: Michele Lhuillier (right) and Yayoy Alcoseba want to know what the SBP can offer their region. CDN PHOTO/LITO TECSON

Apart from Lhuillier and Alcoseba, a handful of BAP officials have already defected to the SBP after the BAP dumped Estrada as its president two weeks ago.

BAP director and spokesman Fritz Gaston and National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu) president Dr. Jay Adalem earlier decided to give up their respective BAP positions.

The INQUIRER reported yesterday that Tony Agustin, the BAP regional director for Western Visayas, is also ready to step down *(See related story on the right).*

Agustin's resignation could trigger an exodus of BAP officials in the provinces to the SBP, a source close to Agustin had said.

"The domino effect is already taking place," Eala said before he left for Geneva last week.

The SBP was created by a three-man panel based on the joint communique to unite basketball stakeholders.

Agustin: I'm still West Visayas director

By Cedelf P. Tupas
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—SPORTSMAN ANTHONY "Tony" Agustin yesterday denied reports of his impending resignation as Western Visayas director of the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

"I am still the BAP West Visayas regional director," Agustin, the team manager of reigning National Students basketball champion West Negros College, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

"So far, I have no plans to resign."

The INQUIRER is standing by its story.

Agustin, however, has confirmed his attendance in the Feb. 5 Unity Congress of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas that will be presided by business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan in Manila.

"I hope the meeting will lead to a unified basketball initiative for the country," he said.

Lining salvages 3rd in All Kansai

LINING: Best RP finisher

VETERAN ANTONIO LINING YIELDED TO Chinese-Taipei's Lo Li-wen, 9-5, in the semifinals, but still wound up as the best Filipino finisher in the 17th Annual All Kansai 9-Ball Open at the Mag Suminoe Billiards Hall in Osaka, Japan, on Sunday.

Lining, who ousted defending champion Masaaki Tanaka of Japan, 9-3, in the quarterfinals, settled for joint third place with Doha Asian Games 8-ball gold medalist Satoshi Kawabata.

Another local bet, Tomoo Takano took the crown and the 1-million yen (about P440,000) that goes with it after trouncing Lo, 9-5, in the finals.

Reigning World Pool champion Ronnie Alcano ended his first major international tournament this year with a quarterfinals defeat at the hands of Takano, 9-6.

On the way to the title, Takano also beat D. Narumi, 9-5, in the round of 32; S. Tsukenn, 9-5, in the round of 16; and Kawabata, 9-3, in the semifinals.

Before blasting Lining, Lo whipped H. Mizushita, 9-6, in the quarterfinals. He also won over Filipino money-game king Dennis Orcollo, 9-4, in the last 16, and K. Nagamatsu, 9-2, in the preliminary round.

Other Filipinos who saw action were Ramil Gallego, Roland Garcia and the promising Carlo Biado.

Gallego exited in the last 16 with a 9-7 loss to Alcano, while Garcia lost to Y. Yano, 9-1, in the round of 32. Biado failed to advance in the knockout stages.

The Filipinos' performance was a big letdown as they dominated the 2005 edition, with Warren Kiamco emerging as champion and Orcollo, Gallego and Lining completing a 1-2-3-4 finish for the Philippines.

Miyuki Fuke of Japan topped women's play. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

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Irrepressible Mac plays big for surging TNT Pals

WITH HIS TIMELY FORAYS JUST WHEN Talk 'N Text needed it most, Mac Cardona provided the spark that lifted the Phone Pals past the Purefoods Giants in their Talk 'N Text PBA Philippine Cup quarterfinal duel last week.

The former De La Salle Green Archer averaged 19.3 points, 4.3 rebounds and 2.0 assists as Talk 'N Text posted three straight wins after dropping the opener to Purefoods in their best-of-five series for a semifinal berth.

Cardona's heroics earned him the PBA Press Corps' Accel-TNT Player of the Week honors for the period Jan. 15-21.

The shifty guard, who was similarly honored for the Nov. 6-12 period, became the sixth player to be cited twice in the season-opener.

Other two-time recipients of the Scribes' citation were Air21's Gary David, San Miguel Beer's Danny Seigle, Alaska's Willie Miller, Seigle and Ginebra's Mark Caguioa and Rudy Hatfield.

So impressive was Cardona that coach Derrick Pumaren gave him special mention over such stars as Asi Taulava, Jimmy Alapag, Yancy de Ocampo and Ren-Ren Ritualo.

"He has really delivered," said Pumaren of the man known as "Captain Hook" in the league because of the way the 6-foot-2 guard launches his patented floaters over the opposing defenders' flailing hands.

"Also, he can combine with any of our point guards whenever we have a need to go small and that makes him even more effective."

One thing Cardona has to keep in check, however, is his spirited shouts or yells due to occasional frustrations on the court.

"He just have to control his emotions. He can't let them take over," said Pumaren.

The Phone Pals will take on the classification round No. 1 team, the Barangay Ginebra Kings, in the semifinals starting tomorrow.

It will be Red Bull against San Miguel Beer in the other semifinal duel.

After being pitted against the likes of James Yap and Peter June Simon in the quarters, Cardona will be ranged against the crowd-favorite Gin Kings' equally explosive Caguioa and Pumaren can't wait for that match-up.

MAC Cardona (right) has really delivered, says his coach, Derrick Pumaren. RYAN LIM

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War among four teams in PBL today

FOUR SQUADS WITH IDENTICAL 7-3 RECORDS SHOOT FOR AN OUTRIGHT semifinal berth in a pair of playoff matches in the PBL Silver Cup today.

GAMES TODAY
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Mail and More
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Harbour Centre

Harbour Centre, the team with the best quotient, takes on fourth-ranked Toyota Otis at 4 p.m. at the Olivarez College Sports Center in Parañaque.

Second-seeded Mail and More and third placer Hapee-PCU see action at 2 p.m.

While the winners earn Final Four slots, the losing teams will settle for a twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals.

For coach Jorge Gallent, Harbour Centre's game plan is already quite clear.

"We have to stop Marvin (Cruz) and Patrick (Cabahug), so we have to play solid defense," Gallent said.

Rising from a poor start, the Sparks banked on Cruz and Cabahug to craft a four-game run that included an 81-71 triumph over streaking Mail and More.

Coach Louie Alas pointed out that good ball rotation keyed the Sparks' timely recovery in the classification phase.

"The players are doing the extra passes," he said.

In their first encounter, the Sparks nipped the Port Masters, 64-60, behind surprise package Eric Rodriguez.

But it was a time when late acquisition JC Intal was still feeling his way into the Port Masters' play.

The high-leaping Intal had clearly assumed leadership by showcasing an all-around performance in recent games.

In the Port Masters' 103-93 double overtime win over TeleTech, Intal came through with 27 points, five assists and one block.

Mail and More—despite dropping its final elimination game—rode on the crest of a six-game winning streak.

"The chemistry of our players is good, plus their energy level is high," said Comets coach Lawrence Chongson.

Mentor Jun Noel agreed, reminding that it was the Comets who snapped his Teeth Masters' five-game opening salvo with a 66-63 decision.

"We have learned our lesson against Mail and More, we'll have to correct it," said Noel. *Jasmine W. Payo*

33
TeleTech
9
ABS

LYN RILLON

REED Juntilla (left) will be one of the key players for Harbour Centre today.

UP, Ateneo batters post 4th straight victories

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES SURVIVED Santo Tomas and Ateneo won via the mercy rule over the weekend to tie for the lead after the first round of men's baseball action of UAAP Season 69 at the Rizal Memorial diamond.

In women's softball on Saturday at the UST field, Adamson went 4-0, also after the first round of hostilities following an 11-6 rout of UP.

The defending champion Lady Falcons actually had to rally past the Lady Maroons, who smelled a kill when they led 6-3 after two innings.

Grand slam home run

But the Lady Falcons could not be denied and uncorked four runs at the bottom third built on Nelsa Delagente's grand slam home run, a rare feat aided by an illegal pitch from UP starter Dione Macasu.

UP ran second after the first round with three wins and one loss, followed by UST with 2-2 and University of the East, which barged into the win column for a 1-3 card at the expense of the Lady Eagles, 16-3, over five innings.

UST exploded with five runs at the top of the seventh inning to send shivers down the spine of the defending champion Maroons, who scored at least a run in each of the first seven innings.

Championship experience

But Diliman batters' championship experience carried them through.

The Maroons are now 3-1 after the first round, the same slate of the idle Ateneo Blue Eagles, who shut down the Falcons of Adamson, 12-1, in five innings also Saturday.

The Tigers are now 2-2 overall, ahead of Adamson and National University, which tote similar 1-3 records.

"*Bumabalik na ang laro namin,*" said UP head coach Emerson Barandoc. "*Lumalaban na kami ngayon. Buo na muli ang* team. Ready *na sila.*"

Melligen, Amonsot get WBO title shots

UNBEATEN MARK JASON MELLIGEN AND Czar Amonsot will get a crack at WBO Asia Pacific titles on Feb. 9 against separate opponents in Seoul, South Korea.

The Bacolod City-raised Melligen, undefeated in six fights and a former Southeast Asian Games gold medalist, will take a still unnamed foe for the WBO Asia Pacific junior welterweight title.

"I'm so happy to be given this break early in my career," Melligen said yesterday. "I thank my manager Antonio Aldeguer."

Melligen turned pro last year and has racked up an impressive 6-0 record spiked with five knockout wins.

Amonsot (17-2-1, 10 KOs), the former 130-pound As-Pac champion from Bohol, will campaign in the lightweight category against another Korean foe. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Crack Thais tipped for RP Open success

CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT LAST year, Thailand's big guns, led by Thaworn Wiratchant, join the star-studded field competing in the $300,000 Philippine Open set Feb. 1-4 at Wack Wack's fabled east course in Mandaluyong.

Thaworn, Asia's No. 1 in 2005 who is known for his outstanding short game, tries to score a first ever Thai victory in Asia's oldest national championship along with Prayad Marksaeng, Prom Meesawat and Chawalit Plaphol.

The three have a combined eight victories on the Asian Tour going into the third leg of this year's circuit.

Also in the field is recent Pakistan Open champion Airil Rizman Zahari of Malaysia.

Defending champion Scott Strange of Australia will certainly face a stern test to his defense as no fewer than six other winners from the 2006 schedule are in the fold.

Wang Ter-chang of Chinese Taipei, Australia's Kane Webber, South African veteran Hendrik Burhmann and Anton Haig, England's Chris Rodgers and South Korea's Suk Jong-yul will be shooting for the $47,550 top check.

Titleist
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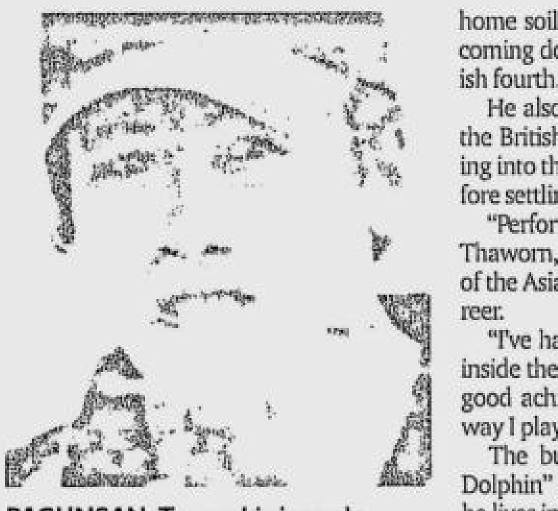
THAWORN: Brightest of Thai stars



PAGUNSAN: Top rookie is ready.

Leading the local bid will be Frankie Miñoza, who is playing in the event after a two-year absence, 2006 Asian Tour Rookie of the Year Juvic Pagunsan, veteran Angelo Que and Antonio Lascuña, who tied for 14th in the Pakistan Open last week.

Thaworn enjoyed his best season two years ago when he won a record four titles en route to winning the Asian Tour Order of Merit for the first time in his career.

The Thai failed to repeat his winning performances last year but still produced an impressive collection of six Top 10s and finished ninth on the UBS Order of Merit.

One of the hardest working players on Tour, Thaworn came close to winning the season-ending Volvo Masters of Asia on home soil but slipped out of the title race coming down the stretch to eventually finish fourth.

He also enjoyed a memorable debut at the British Open at Royal Liverpool, moving into the Top 10 at the halfway stage before settling for tied 31st place.

"Performance wise, it's been good," said Thaworn, who is very proud being on top of the Asian Tour list at least once in his career.

"I've had a lot of top finishes and being inside the Top 15 of the Order of Merit is a good achievement. I was proud with the way I played at the British Open."

The burly Prom, nicknamed the "Big Dolphin" due to his physique and because he lives in the coastal town of Hua Hin, has made a huge splash since turning professional in 2004.

He enjoyed his career breakthrough last season, winning the SK Telecom Open in Korea, where he defeated a field that included Korean superstar Choi Kyung-ju, last season's UBS Order of Merit number one Jeev Milkha Singh of India and teenage female star Michelle Wie. With a report from Inquirer Sports Staff

SPORTSWATCH

WORLD SLASHERS CHAMP: Boxing hero and topnotch cocker-breeder Manny Pacquiao (right) and Araneta Coliseum operations manager Vic Gana (left) pose for posterity with 2007 World Slasher Cup co-winners Gen Gen Arayata (second from left) and Patrick Antonio, whose entries "Super Clyde & Yce II" and "AS PA Sagupaan Winning Line SSF," respectively, topped the annual championships.

Insurance exec tops MCC active chess

ERVEN PERLAS OUTPLAYED ORLANDO PASCUAL IN THE FIFTH AND FINAL round to rule the MCC Executive Active chess tournament over the weekend at St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong City. Perlas of BPI/MS Insurance Corp. finished with 4.5 points to claim his second MCC executive title. Romeo Talavera of Philippine National Bank finished second with 4.0 points.

NPC tri-media badminton listing still open

ORGANIZERS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL PRESS CLUB TRI-MEDIA BADminton tournament will accept entries until Jan. 30. NPC president Roy Mabasa said the draw for Classes A and B for men's doubles, ladies doubles and mixed doubles is on Feb. 3-4 and 10-11 at the Rizal Memorial Badminton Center. The tournament is open to all NPC members and employees. For inquiries, call tournament coordinator Edwin Rollon at 0906-3707761.

Arnis Philippines celebrates 20th year

ARNIS PHILIPPINES INC. CELEBRATED ITS 20TH YEAR OF ACCREDITATION by the Philippine Olympic Committee in a simple gathering at Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan. Raymond S. Velayo, president of Arpi, led the celebration along with Servillano A. Padiz, Jr., internal vice president; Richardson C. Gialogo, external VP; Aniano C. Lota, Jr., secretary general; Dewey B. Sahagun, treasurer; Eliza L. Granada, auditor; Medardo B. Quiambao, PRO; Ma. Gemma N. Ferrer, deputy secretary general; and Richmond Velayo, deputy treasurer. Arpi also enjoys Philippine Sports Commission recognition.

Makati Int'l Derby blasts off Feb. 5

THE FIRST MAKATI INTERNATIONAL 8-COCK SUPER DERBY FEATURING the United States' finest cockers kicks off Feb. 5, 7 and 9 at the Makati Coliseum. The tournament dangles a prize pot of P3 million and is organized by the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. Promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co yesterday welcomed six more US bidders—Jerry Cottam, Rey Westal, Jerry Wesson, Jay Gentry, Jess Casey and Randy Hall. The cast of 20 foreign and 60 local cockers collide in a 2-cock elimination round on Feb. 5.

Thank you for your prayers

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

(I would like to say thank you to the Lord Almighty for curing me of my debilitating ailment. I would also like to thank from the bottom of my heart the hardworking and patient staff of Nazarenus College Foundation Hospital, especially Dr. Enrique Puentespina and Dr. Araceli Maliwat, my physical therapists Jocelyn Buenaventura and Fatima Hospital's Jeff Jacinto, my speech therapists Miriam Miningas and Jennifer del Rosario and the nurses and staff. Also, my deepest gratitude to my late mother, my sister, Chuchi Hermoso, and my brothers Junior Iñigo and Pancho Manalad, my nieces and nephews led by Jay and Apple. Last but not the least, I would like to offer my thanks to my friends headed by my compadre and People's Journal Editor in Chief Gus Villanueva and the countless others who offered their prayers wishing me a speedy and complete recovery).

* * *

WHEN BARON DE COUBERTIN FIRST DEVeloped his vision of the Modern Olympic Games more than a century ago, his thinking went far beyond merely the establishment of an international sporting event.

According to Olympic Message magazine, his real interest lay in the broader benefits that sports could bring to mankind. He regarded the true Olympian as the embodiment of exemplary moral as well as physical prowess.

Today, Coubertin would be astonished by the scale of the Olympic Games and the power of commercial sponsors, who share his fundamental vision of Olympism and carry his message to every corner of the globe.

While sports remains at the heart of the Olympic Movement, today's Olympic family is dedicated to finding new ways of spreading the Games' ideals of excellence, fair play, honor, peace and goodwill.

* * *

It is for this reason that 15th Asian Games gold medalists Violito Payla and Joan Tipon must be supported by well-meaning companies and individuals in our quest for the first ever Olympic gold (Billiards and wushu, which produced the other Filipino Asiad medalists courtesy of Antonio Gabica and Rene Catalan, respectively, are not on the Olympic menu).

Not only that.

"Some of the funds intended for elite sports can now be channeled to our grassroots development program to strengthen our search for talents," said PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez recently.

Ramirez had received a fresh mandate from President Macapagal-Arroyo to lead the country's campaign for a first Olympic gold medal in the 2008 Beijing Games following the recent success of the country in the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar. Ramirez and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo had promised to support the Olympic campaign.

Among those being eyed to support the Olympic campaign are the country's billionaires headed by Lucio Tan, Henry Sy Jr. and Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala.

The Philippines captured four gold on top of six silver and nine bronze medals in Qatar. It was the country's best Asiad performance in 44 years even though it only had a budget of P30 million.

The Olympic hopefuls identified as "super athletes" come from diving, fencing, archery and the combat sports of boxing, taekwondo and karate. As part of their preparation, the fencers and divers will be sent to China, the archers and taekwondo-jins to South Korea and the karatekas to Italy.

A Cuban coach will be hired for the boxers who will compete in several international meets before the Beijing Olympics.

* * *

My family and I condole with former Bulacan Gov. Obet Pagdanganan over the death of his only son Raymond, who died on Sunday.

Tinga Cup Moto-X lures stellar cast

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST RIDERS DISplay their wares in the Mayor Freddie Tinga Cup Motocross set Jan. 28 at the new Fast Track Motorsports Park in Upper Bicutan, Taguig City.

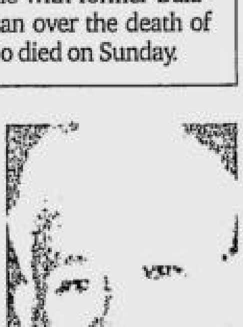
Joining the stellar cast are riders from Guam, who will challenge pro riders Glen Aguilar and Kenneth San Andres, junior champions Patrick and Jacob Orbe, as well as other national riders from Manila, La Union, Bicol, Quezon, Bulacan and Laguna.

Tinga will officially open the track at 11 a.m. just before the start of competition in the juniors, enduro, underbone and production categories.

Ken Falco, president of the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa) and Macky Carapiet, head of the Asian Motocross Commission, said the new track will not only boost the development of the sport but will also make Taguig the capital of motorsports in Asia.

The event actually marks the return of motocross in Metro Manila. The last race was staged in Marikina in 1996.

The Tinga Cup will also serve as a warmup for the upcoming FIM Asian Puerto Princesa Motocross Championship which will feature champions from over 10 countries and telecast by Star TV and ESPN.



AGUILAR

Wanted: SEAG Chef de Mision

By June Navarro

THE MAN WHO LED THE COUNTRY to its first-ever overall championship in the Southeast Asian Games and to its best finish in the Asian Games in 44 years wants others to take his job this time.

Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez said he would ask the Philippine Olympic Committee to appoint another Chef de Mision for the Thailand SEAG this December as soon as possible.

Ramirez, the country's chef de mission in the 2005 Manila SEAG and last year's Doha Asian Games, said he would concentrate on the other projects of the PSC.

After leading the country to its first overall title in the SEAG, he also served as head of delegation when the Philippines scored a 4-6-9 gold-silver-bronze medal finish in the Doha Asiad last year—the best showing of Team Philippines in the quadrennial games since 1962.

Ramirez mentioned the nutrition of athletes, grassroots development and sports medicine as among the areas that the PSC will concentrate on in a long-range program being developed with the help of the POC.

The choice for a new SEAG Chef de Mission will be tackled during the POC executive board meeting tomorrow.

Among the possible choices for the post are boxing chief Manny Lopez, POC chair Robert Aventajado, Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella of weightlifting, swimming's Mark Joseph, bowling's Steve Hontiveros and POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr.

NOT THIS TIME: William Ramirez

"The preparation for the SEA Games will be quite different because this is the first time the country will defend its title," said Ramirez. "Expectations are high, so we better begin the preparation as early as possible."

Lopez is a strong contender for the post after boxing produced two Asiad golds courtesy of Joan Tipon and Violito Payla and two bronzes through Godfrey Castro and Genebert Basadre.

Pacman to root for Arce in US

MANNY PACQUIAO WILL FLY TO THE UNITed States this week to cheer for his pal Jorge Arce in his fight against Argentinian Julio David Ler at the Honda Center in Anaheim, California.

Top Rank promoter Bob Arum confirmed this in an interview with Michael Marley of Boxing-confidential.com.

Arum said that Pacquiao's US trip will give him an opportunity to personally warn the Filipino champion not to take Korean Chi In-jin for granted in their coming fight.

Pacquiao and Arce became friends during the Filipino's three bouts with Erik Morales, where the Arce was a constant fixture at the press conferences and during the fights.

Arce (45-3-1, 35 KOs) holds the WBC flyweight interim title. He is the mandatory challenger to WBC super fly champ Cristian Mijares.

PACQUIAO

Arum said he expects the April 28 Pacquiao-Chi clash in Macau to be an explosive fight, and that Pacquiao should train in the US.

"He should be training in the US with Freddie Roach, and not in the Philippines," said Arum, pointing out the distractions that might come Pacquiao's way, including politicians who are trying to convince him to run for office. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

The incomparable craft of Bruce Lee's teacher

HE SPARRED WITH BRUCE LEE AND left a deep impression, meriting an invitation to appear with the late martial arts superstar in the blockbuster movie "Enter the Dragon."

But Filipino Trovador Ramos, then based in Hong Kong teaching martial arts and leaving audiences in awe by breaking granite stones with his bare hands, declined Lee's offer.

Not because the pay was small. In his supposed "Dragon" role, he would lose a fight and die, something which Ramos felt did not suit him.

Lee, however, was able to persuade Ramos to become one of his coaches and off-camera fight instructor. Were it not for Lee's early death, Ramos would have joined him in a Hollywood movie.

Ramos moved on, returned to the Philippines and continued to propagate his unique brand of martial arts—a mix of judo, aikido and American combat judo—through his The Ramos Academy of Consolidated Martial Arts, or Tracma.

Now 69, Ramos is a 14th-degree red belter. A heart attack five years ago slowed him down, but he has never stopped.

"I would like to pass on to our instructors a lot more things that I know," Master Ramos, as he is called by his disciples, told the INQUIRER. "I want to develop my system further."

The movie bug did bite Ramos a bit in the late '70s. He made several local films, the biggest of which was The Red Belt Master.

It was through those times that his stature grew. There was a story about Ramos killing a carabao with one blow during a film shoot.

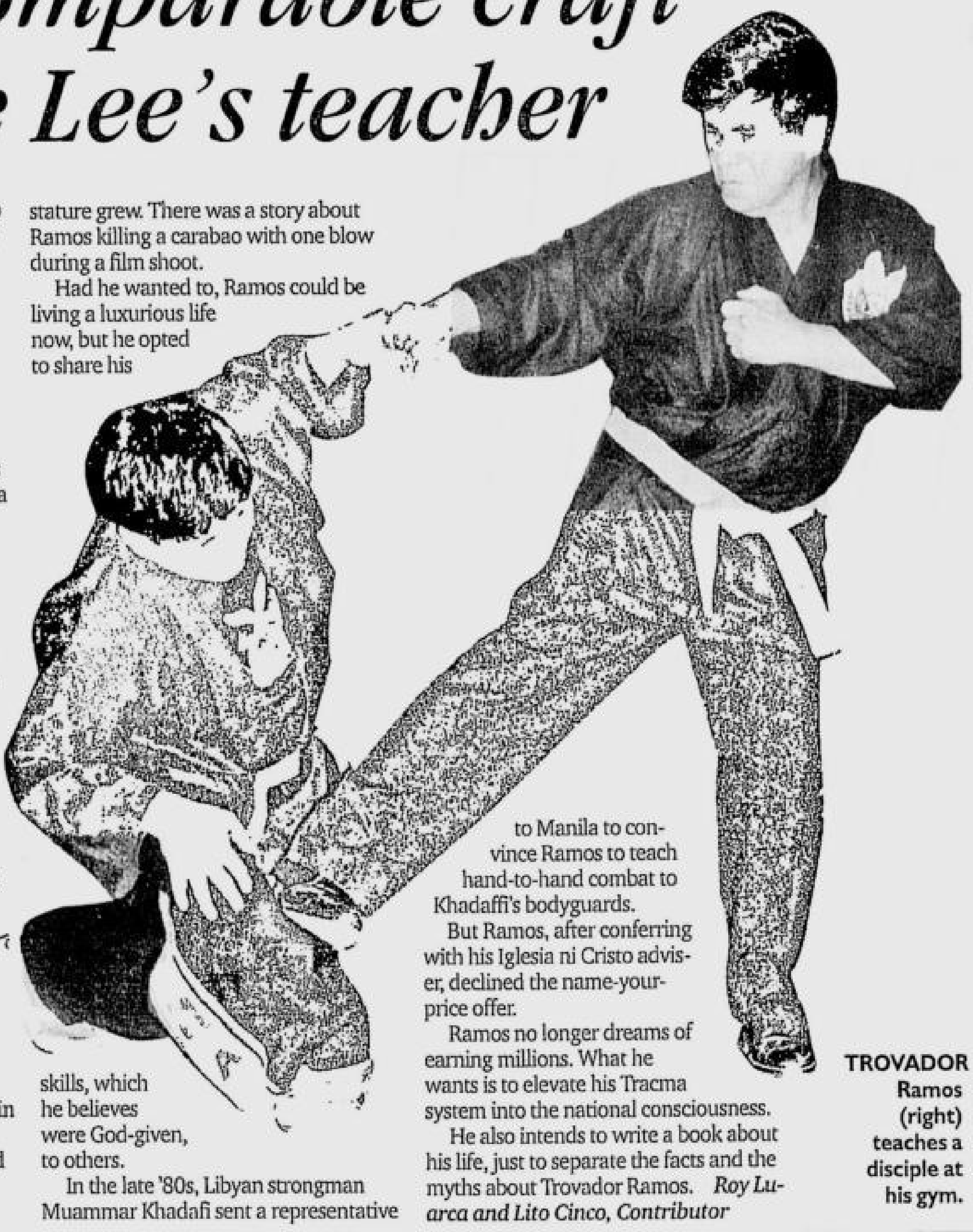
Had he wanted to, Ramos could be living a luxurious life now, but he opted to share his skills, which he believes were God-given, to others.

In the late '80s, Libyan strongman Muammar Khadafi sent a representative to Manila to convince Ramos to teach hand-to-hand combat to Khadaffi's bodyguards.

But Ramos, after conferring with his Iglesia ni Cristo adviser, declined the name-your-price offer.

Ramos no longer dreams of earning millions. What he wants is to elevate his Tracma system into the national consciousness.

He also intends to write a book about his life, just to separate the facts and the myths about Trovador Ramos. *Roy Luarca and Lito Cinco, Contributor*


TROVADOR Ramos (right) teaches a disciple at his gym.

Batawang stops Sinulog card foe

CEBU CITY—WORLD-RANKED BERT BATAWANG STOPPED PINGPING TEPUra with a right uppercut in the opening round of their scheduled 10-rounder top-billing the big Sinulog card on Sunday at the Gaisano Countrymall car park. Batawang of SGG Stable sent the taller Tepura on his knees and out for the count in 2:48 of the round. The win improved Batawang's record to 40 wins, 12 losses and 3 draws (33 KOs) and kept his hopes alive for a crack at WBO light-flyweight champ Hugo Cazares at the "World Cup" set in July or August. In the chief supporting bout, ex-RP flyweight champion Federico Catubay stopped Nelson Guindolan in 2:12 of the fourth. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Malaybalay City
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
Bids and Awards Committee

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB NO. 300-07-001

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon with office address at Capitol Compound, City of Malaybalay, Bukidnon invites interested eligible Construction Firms and to those who submit Application for Eligibility and subsequently to bid if eligible.

Name of Project	: Construction, Extension and Rehabilitation of Kibawe Provincial Hospital
Location	: Kibawe, Bukidnon
Project Duration	: 300 Calendar Days
Approved Budget for the Contract	: P27,517,114.71
Brief Description	: Construction, Extension and Rehabilitation of Kibawe Provincial Hospital as per approved Program of Works Plans and Specifications.
Source of Funding	: General Funds

Activity	Dates	Place
Posting of IAEB at Provincial Website, Phil GEPS and conspicuous places/ Issuance of Eligibility Statement Form	Jan. 19 - 25, 2007	BAC Secretariat Office, Capitol, Malaybalay City
Deadline for Submission of Letter of Intent and Eligibility Statement Form	Feb. 1, 2007	-do-
Issuance of Notice of Eligibility	Feb. 7, 2007	
Issuance of Bid Documents	Feb. 8, 2007	-do-
Pre-bid Conference	Feb. 14, 2007 - 2:00 pm	-do-
Submission and Opening of bids	Feb. 28, 2007 - 2:00 pm	-do-

Prospective bidders should posses a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract with a value of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) and have **KEY PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT available for the prosecution of the contract and must be registered in the Security and Exchange Commission** (SEC). The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

A complete set of eligibility requirements and bid documents may be obtained from BAC Secretariat Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City upon payment of non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 for each set to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer.

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid thereto and award the contract to any bidder, whose proposal as determined by the BAC, is the advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES**
Provincial Administrator
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Jan. 21 & 23, 2007)

Baguio hosts King of Road races Feb. 11

THE ADIDAS KING OF THE ROAD (KOTR) kicks off its four-race schedule this year in Baguio City on Feb. 11 at Burnham Park.

Joey Singian, Adidas managing director, said the KOTR will be staged in two other key cities before ending at the Global City in Taguig on March 11.

The Baguio City run will be followed by the KOTR in Davao City on Feb. 25, and the KOTR in Cebu City on March 4.

Adidas is also staging on June 17 a simultaneous run in the cities of Baguio, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Iloilo, Laoag, Naga, Tacloban, Tarlac and in Metro Manila in an attempt to get 100,000 runners on the road at the same time.

The KOTR in Baguio City, with Leo Arnaiz of Athletes Haven as local organizer, gets going at 6:30 a.m. The men and women winners will receive P10,000 cash and the same amount of Adidas products on top of getting a chance to represent Luzon in the national finals in June.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Batang Westside (6), Sweet Talk (3), At All Cost (8), Classic Royale (9), Step on the Gas (7)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Legendary (3), Queen Esther (12), Brazilian Babe (6), Regal Chief (2), Honest to Goodness (9)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Epic Energy (2), El Cid (3), Real Material (1), Gelay's Charm (7)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Top Most (8), Gigi's Gold (10), Kaori Yoks (11), Princess Leighla (5), Desert Breeze (2)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Letshaveaparty (8), Paana Ba (5), Dancing Slew (4), Sincerity (3)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Naglalabyog (7), Blitzkrieg (10), Pirouette (4), Hoy Sobra Na (2), Red Hot Water (6)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Friendly Venture/Tiger Raffy (4), Clear Stone (8), D As In Dixie (11), Firrarione (6), El Love Senora (3)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Be My Pride (8), Gold Money (11), Spark (6), Money Man (2), Strong Red (10), Hazil Coming (5)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION SALE

Sealed bids for the sale/public auction of one (1) lot of unserviceable properties stored at the Storeroom of the Commission on Elections, Intramuros, Manila, and one (1) lot of unserviceable vehicles located at the Maxilite Building, Perez Street, Paco, Manila, shall be received at the Session Hall of the Commission on Elections, 8th Floor Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila, on January 30, 2007, at 10:00 o'clock in the morning, at which place, date and time, said sealed bids shall be opened in the presence of the Members of the Disposal Committee, representative of the Commission on Audit and the participating bidders. Prospective bidders may inspect the unserviceable properties, subject of this public auction sale, at any time during office hours beginning January 23, 2007.

Bid documents may be obtained during regular office hours beginning January 23, 2007 from the Property Division upon payment to the Cash Division, this Commission, of a non-refundable amount of one thousand pesos (Ph1,000.00).

Bids shall state the lot price for item/s bidded and shall be accompanied by a Bidder's Bond equivalent to ten per centum (10%) of the offer, in the form of cash or manager's check/cashier's check payable to the "commission on elections".

The Commission on Elections reserves the right to reject any and all bids without any explanation, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bids, as may, in its sole discretion be considered most reasonable and advantageous to the government. The right is also reserved to reject bids which are defective due to inadequate preparation, confusion or lack of sufficient data.

January 22, 2007.

J. THADDEUS P. HERNAN
Chairman
Disposal Committee

(PDI - Jan 23 2007)

Office of the President
BCDA
Bases Conversion and Development Authority

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

Bidding for the Contract for the Construction of Ramps in Tarlac

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), through the BCDA 2007 Corporate Funds, intends to apply the sum of **One Hundred Million One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Four and 75/100 (P100,001,254.75)** for the projects listed hereunder, being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Services shall be for the Contract for the Construction of Ramps/Approaches in Tarlac. The works shall include, but not limited to the following:

Construction of Ramps/Approaches for the following overpasses in Tarlac.

- Tinang Overpass
- Sto. Nino Overpass
- Pitabunan Overpass
- Mabilog Overpass- Luisita I
- Pando Overpass – Luisita II
- Ligaya II Overpass
- Ligaya III Overpass (Maligaya) and
- Sta. Maria Overpass

BCDA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the bidding for Construction of the aforecited Project. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, at least **A, Medium B**, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Applicants must submit their LOIs during the issuance date of Eligibility documents on **January 23-30, 2007 only** and obtain the Application for Eligibility and to Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Twenty Thousand (P20,000.00)** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on **09 February 2007 at 11:00 a.m.** and the Opening of Eligibility Documents at **1:30 p.m of the same date** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. **Late submission of Eligibility Documents shall be accepted only for recording purposes but will not be considered and will be returned unopened.** Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from BCDA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below **from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on 17-23 January 2007.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the SBAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Fifty Thousand (P50,000.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the Bidder or his authorized representative **from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on 16-20 February 2007.**

BCDA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **27 February 2007, 10:00AM** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **11:00 a.m. of 12 March 2007.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form:

a. Cash, managers check, cashiers' check, irrevocable letter of credit, or bank draft – one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
b. Bank Guarantee – one and a half percent (1½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
c. Surety Bond from a reputable insurance company accredited by the Insurance Commission – two and a half percent (2½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.

Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **12 March 2007 at 1:30 p.m.** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below on the same day.

Completion of the Works is required by a total of **One Hundred Eighty (180) calendar days.**

BCDA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Further information may be obtained from Ms. Nancy Paje, of SBAC Secretariat.

BASES CONVERSION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St.
Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City
Telephone Number (632) 816-6666 Telfax No. (632) 816-0996
Website: www. bcda.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **VICTOR V. ZABLAN**
Chairman
Special Bids and Award Committee (SBAC)

(PDI - Jan 17 & 23, 2007)

SPORTS

Colts, Bears barge into Super Bowl

CHICAGO—INDIANAPOLIS FINALLY VANquished some playoff demons and Chicago's defense lived up to its billing as both teams clawed their way past worthy opponents Sunday to book a Super Bowl showdown in Miami.

Indianapolis quarterback Peyton Manning engineered one of the greatest comebacks in National Football League playoff history by throwing for 349 yards and rushing for one touchdown as the Colts rallied to beat New England 38-34.

"It wasn't a panic situation," Manning said. "We knew we couldn't get it all back at once. We just slowly chipped away at their lead."

Chicago's defense forced four turnovers as the host Bears reached their first Super Bowl in over two decades with a 39-14 win over New Orleans.

"It doesn't get any better than this right now," said Bears quarterback Rex Grossman.

The top-seeded Bears (15-3) will meet Indianapolis (15-4) in the Super Bowl at Miami on February 4.

"We haven't achieved the ultimate goal, but we have given ourselves the opportunity," Manning said.

Manning sparked the Colts' historic rally which saw them down by 15 points at halftime and as much as 18 to New England which had eliminated Indianapolis from the playoffs twice in the last three seasons.

Often criticized for not leading his team to a championship despite his prolific passing numbers and his portfolio of commercial endorsements, Manning showed plenty of heart by rallying the Colts to a 32-point second half.

A seven-time Pro Bowler and two-time MVP, Manning completed the comeback with a seven-play, 80-yard drive which rookie Joseph Addai capped with a three-yard touchdown run with exactly one minute left.

"It is not the situation you want to be in, down 21-3, but we just took it one series at a time and everybody did his part and we came out with a great win," said Manning, who will make his first Super Bowl appearance in his ninth NFL season.

The Pats tried to rally in the final minute, but New England quarterback Tom Brady threw an interception to Colts' Marlin Jackson which clinched the win for Indianapolis.

Chicago's Lovie Smith became the first black coach to reach a Super Bowl. He was followed just hours later by Colts head coach Tony Dungy, also an African-American.

Chicago last made the Super Bowl in 1986 under coach Mike Ditka. *AFP*

KIM Clijsters of Belgium hits a return against Daniela Hantuchova. AFP

Sharapova subdues Zvonareva

MELBOURNE—TOP SEED MARIA SHARAPOVA edged out Vera Zvonareva 7-5 6-4 to reach the Australian Open quarterfinals for the third time in her career on Monday. The 19-year-old Russian broke in a tough game 12 of the opening set to take the initiative and despite recovering from 5-2 down in the second, the 22nd seed could not fend off Sharapova, who won in an hour and 46 minutes on Rod Laver Arena. Sharapova, a semi-finalist the last two years at Melbourne Park, plays her third fellow Russian of the tournament in the last eight when she faces 12th seed Anna Chakvetadze. *Reuters*

Clijsters vs Hingis in Last 8

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—JAMES BLAKE HAD ANOTHER Grand Slam disappointment, losing in the fourth round to Chile's Fernando Gonzalez at the Australian Open.

Blake, who finished last year at No. 4 in the rankings after making the final of the season-ending Masters Cup, lost 7-5, 6-4, 7-6 (4) against 10th-ranked Gonzalez on Monday.

The 27-year-old American has never gone beyond the quarterfinals in 20 majors, but came into the season's first Grand Slam tournament confident of improving on that after defending his title at the Sydney International.

Instead, it was Gonzalez advancing to the quarterfinals for the first time in Melbourne, completing a set at all four Grand Slams.

Gonzalez got himself out of trouble with aces when he had to, and regularly ripped forehand winners to keep Blake on the baseline.

The 26-year-old Chilean player had a little trouble closing, wasting two match points on Blake's serve and then getting broken himself when serving for the match.

But Gonzalez dominated the tiebreaker, getting two mini breaks before closing with an ace, his 18th.

Tommy Haas ended eighth-seeded David Nalbandian's endurance run, advancing to the quarterfinals with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 win.

Nalbandian twice rallied from two sets down and saved match points in earlier rounds, but ran out of gas after taking the opening set against the 12th-ranked Haas, sending a backhand wide on match points.

On the women's side, Martina Hingis and Kim Clijsters set up their second straight Australian Open quarterfinal showdown.

MARTINA Hingis celebrates after slipping past China's Li Na. AFP

Hingis, the Swiss star who swept the 1997-99 titles and reached the finals the next three years before quitting the tour because of nagging foot and ankle problems, weathered an early challenge from China's Li Na before winning 4-6, 6-3, 6-0.

Clijsters, a 23-year-old Belgian in her final season on the tour, beat No. 15 Daniela Hantuchova 6-1, 7-5. Last year in the quarterfinals, Clijsters ended Hingis' first run at a major after three seasons in retirement, winning 6-3, 2-6, 6-4.

"It's always a pleasure to play her again here," Clijsters said. "She's just a great champion."

The pair are friends on and off the court and are tied 4-4 in head-to-heads, although Clijsters has won their three matches since Hingis returned to the tour. *AP*

Mavs gain revenge against Miami Heat

DWYANE Wade (left) of the Heat battles for a loose ball with Jerry Stackhouse of the Mavericks. AFP

MIAMI—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS GAINED a small measure of revenge over defending NBA champions Miami on Sunday, downing the Heat 99-93.

Dallas won the first two games of last season's Finals but the Heat rallied to claim the championship by winning the next four. The Mavs sport this season's best record (34-8) after a run that saw them win 20 of their last 21 games.

Josh Howard scored 25 points and Jerry Stackhouse had 23 for the Mavericks, who had to withstand a determined Miami comeback in the second half.

"They're the world champions," Stackhouse told reporters.

"You knew they were going to come back with a champion's heart.

"It was a great game which had some great players making great plays."

Dirk Nowitzki had 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Mavericks, while Jason Terry added 11 points and had 11 assists.

Dwyane Wade had 31 points with six rebounds and six assists for the Heat, who had to make do without the injured Shaquille O'Neal yet again.

Wade also left the game with an injury in the first quarter but returned to play 44 minutes, though he missed a potential game tying three-pointer with 5.8 seconds left.

Jason Williams added 17 points for the Heat, who slipped to 18-22 with their second straight loss.

In Phoenix, Shawn Marion had 17 points and a career-high 20 rebounds as the Suns beat the Minnesota Timberwolves, 131-102.

Tim Duncan had 17 points and 15 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs beat the 76ers, 99-85.

Brandon Roy scored 28 points as the Portland Trail Blazers edged the Milwaukee Bucks, 99-95. *Reuters*

NBA on TV Today
9 a.m.—Minnesota vs Phoenix
(replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)

"I didn't want to look old. And thanks to Nu/Hart, I don't"

I wasn't really that bald before, but my father was bald and I knew it could happen to me as well. Sometimes when I saw my old friends and classmates, they would say "Oh, you're already balding." I had to do something about it. The earlier, the better.

I've been hearing about Nu/Hart and after learning more about them on TV in Cebu, I wanted to visit the clinic for a free consultation. So I did the next time I was in Manila, and they explained the procedure to me in detail. I scheduled myself for a procedure right then and there.

Nu/Hart's solution is permanent and completely natural. And whatever you do to your normal hair you can do with your Nu/Hart hair transplant. That's how it is for me, thanks to Nu/Hart.

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Paraguay rules World Cup by 7 shots

SUN CITY, SOUTH AFRICA—PARAGUAY surprised all with their seven-stroke victory on their debut in the Women's World Cup of Golf on Sunday, making a tremendous impact for a country with only six golf courses.

Julieta Granada and Celeste Troche sealed a wire-to-wire victory with a seven under par 65 in the final betterball matches for a total of nine under par.

"Day one was key," said the 20-year-old Granada. "We didn't expect a four-shot lead at only five under then, but it made a big difference because the alternate shot is such a tough format, and then everybody scores low in the betterball."

The United States team of Juli Inkster and Pat Hurst finished second on two under with a closing 67. Korea's Kim Young and Shin Ji-Yai yook third place on one under, also with a 67.

CELESTE Troche (left) and Julieta Granada. REUTERS

Granada and Troche did not get off to the best of starts when they both three-putted the first for a bogey.

But Granada soon found her form, making the birdies at holes three, five, six, eight and 11, while Troche birdied 10, chipped in for birdie on 17 and then holed a five-footer for birdie at the last.

"That chip-in on 17 made us realize that this wasn't just a dream but that it was actually happening," said Troche.

As a team, the two players could not be further apart in their careers at the moment.

Granada is a rising star on the LPGA Tour and came into this event having claimed the richest first prize in women's golf when she won the one million dollars ADT Championship.

"I like winning. I'm enjoying going to the press conferences, and the cheques are nice too," said Granada, whose mother caddied for her. *AFP*

Hoffman tops Hope golf

PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA—Charley Hoffman birdied the first playoff hole here Sunday to win the five million-dollar Bob Hope Chrysler Classic ahead of fellow American John Rollins.

Hoffman won on the same hole he had just eagled to force the playoff, as he and Rollins overcame blustery winds that had some players saying that play should have been stopped.

Hoffman had capped his fifth and final round with an 11-foot eagle putt, then sank a four-footer for birdie in the playoff to capture his first US PGA Tour title.

Rollins booked his place in the playoff with a two-putt birdie from 25 feet at his final hole.

But at the first playoff hole his tee shot found the right fairway bunker. Rollins gave himself a 30-foot birdie chance, but missed it left.

Hoffman and Rollins both finished at 17-under-par 343.

England's Justin Rose, who held the lead entering the final round, shot a 76 and missed getting into the playoff by one shot. *AFP*

VOLLEY CHAMP: Security Bank Corp. emerges as the 2006 Banker's Athletic Association Volleyball Tournament women's division champion. From left are Princess Tiu, Mae Losin, Aron Aguilar, Marie Asperas, Ers Iratay—head coach. Second row: Bhel Samson, Vicky dela Cruz, Angie Go, Myra Rubio, Leon Santiago and Jess Aguilar, assistant coach.

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Treasury bill rates continue to fall

91-day yield at a low 3.171%

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY BILL RATES ACROSS ALL MATURITIES fell to new all-time lows yesterday, reflecting optimism on the economic environment and the huge amount of available cash circulating in the market.

"This (drop in the rates) was more than just a doing of liquidity. We cannot stop the market when it is very bullish," National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters in a briefing after the auction yesterday.

The latest treasury bill rates were lower than the all-time lows recorded two weeks ago.

The 91-day yield dropped to 3.171 percent after the three-month securities attracted P4.97 billion worth of bids. The new rate for the 91-day bills was 62.4 basis points lower than the 3.795 percent recorded in the auction two weeks ago. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

The rate for the 182-day bills fell by 66.2 basis points to 3.665 percent from the previous 4.317 percent. This was influenced by the P13.34 billion worth of bids for the six-month debt paper.

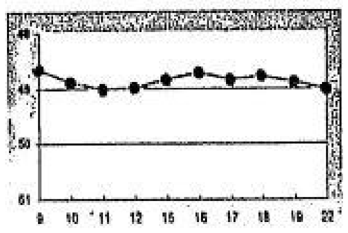
The 364-day bills fetched 4.218 percent, also down by 38.6 basis points from 4.604 percent. Volume of bids for the one-year bills reached P12.2 billion.

The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted P700 million worth of bids for the 91-day bills, P2.1 billion for the 182-day securities, and P2.8 billion for the 364-day debt paper.

The government, under its borrowing program, was supposed to raise

TREASURY/B2

INDICATORS
CURRENCIES



JANUARY

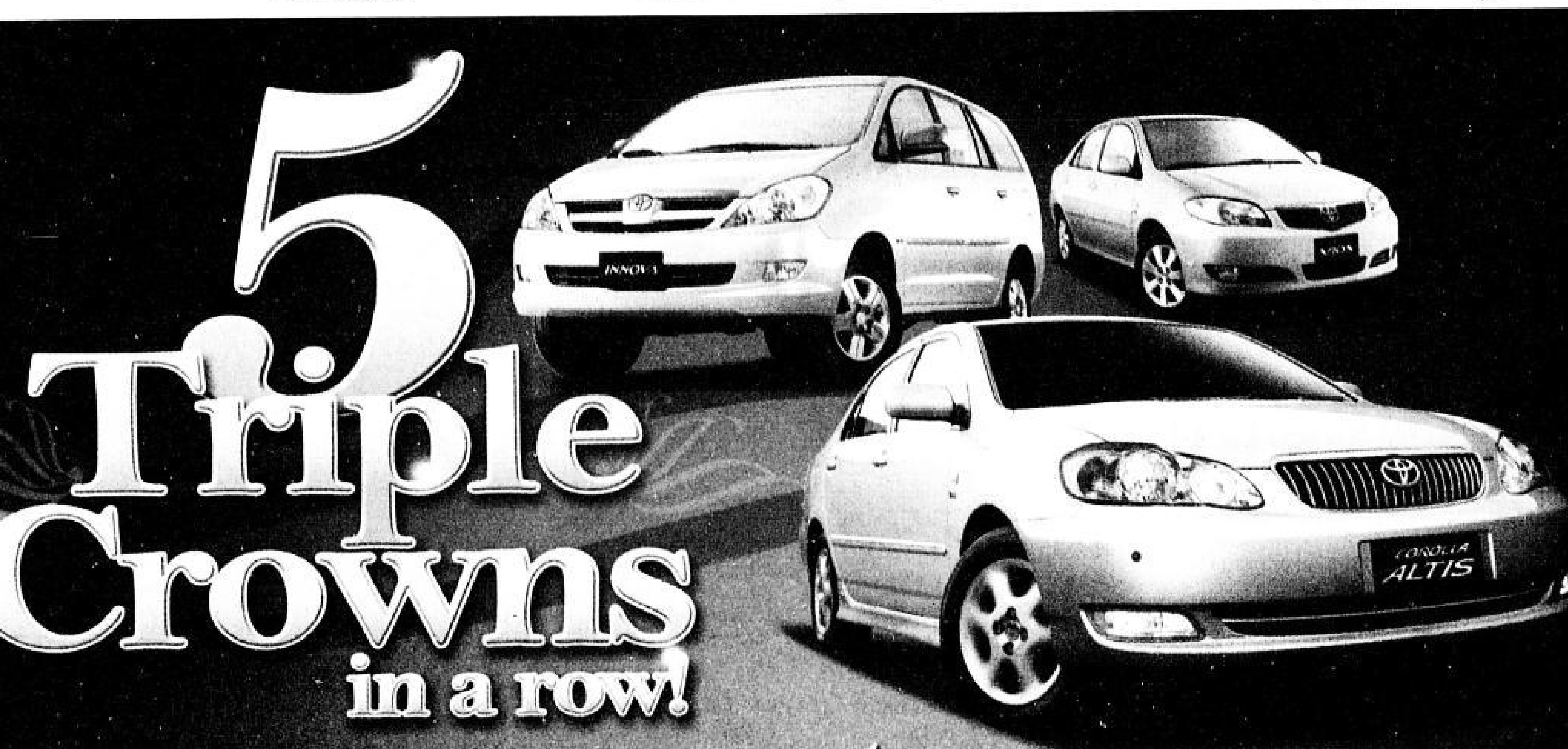
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 49.03 = $

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 22, 2007

IN THIS ISSUE

Foreign brokers keep buying /B2
PhilWeb's online sports betting gets Pagcor nod /B2
Gasoline, diesel prices seen to drop further in coming weeks /B6
Fitch in town to rate RP's fiscal gains /B6



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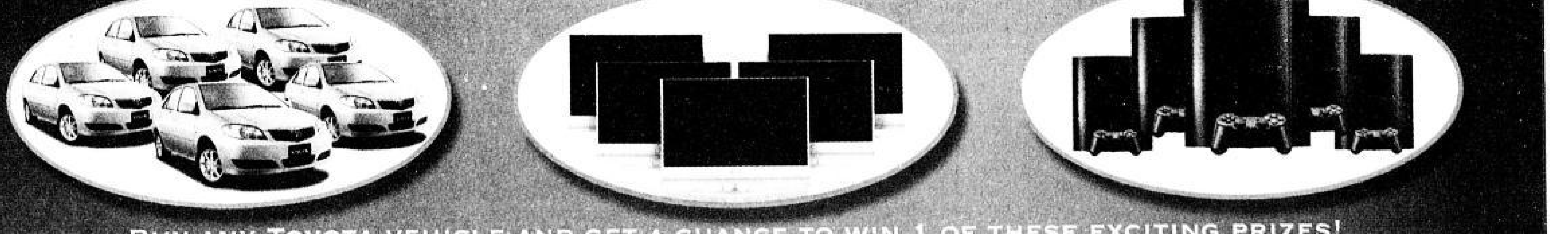

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		381,500	31,792	21,302	16,837	11,982	9,555	8,175	7,429
ALTIS 1.6 J M/T	723,000	72,300	54,477	37,466	29,649	21,193	16,970	14,589	13,302
		361,500	30,125	20,083	15,404	10,962	8,741	7,472	6,790
VIOS 1.3 J M/T	553,000	55,300	43,858	30,163	23,850	17,047	13,651	11,745	10,709
		276,500	23,884	16,388	12,942	9,210	7,344	6,289	5,715

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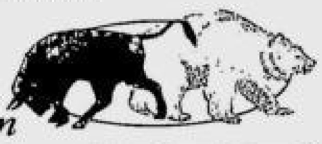


Ron Nathan

GETTING OLD IS WHEN YOUR WIFE SAYS, "Let's go upstairs and make love," and you reply, "Darling, I can't do both."

A sexy girl catches your eye and your pacemaker opens the garage door.

You remember when the Dead Sea when it was only sick.

'Getting lucky' means finding your car in a parking lot.

An 80-year-old man married a 20-year-old girl and after a year, she gave birth. "Incredible", said the nurse, "How do you do it at your age?" He answered, "You got to keep the old motor running." The following year, she gave birth again. "You are amazing," said the nurse. "He replied, "You got to keep the old engine running." The following year, she gave birth to twins. The man boasted, "You have to keep the old engine running." "In that case," said the nurse" You had better change the oil. These two are black."

A doctor had to test 3 old ladies thought to be going gaga. He said to the first old lady, "What is 3 times 3?" She replied 297.

He asked the second old lady, "What is 3 times 3?" She said "Friday." In despair, he asked the third old lady the same question. "Nine", she replied. "That's fantastic," said the doctor. "How did you do it?"

"Oh", she replied, "I just subtracted 297 from Friday."

I hope nothing happens to Apple. It could lead to a loss of Jobs. I remember when it was IPO'd.

* * *

Over the past week, the DOW has been flat and therefore not an influence on other markets. However, this week will produce a spate of important company earnings, which will continue for 3 weeks. So I expect Wall Street to become more volatile and exert some effect on other markets. To date, only 15 percent of company results have been announced and these show a year-on-year gain of 9.3 percent, below the double-digit gains of the 11 previous quarters.

The fall in the price of crude oil to an intraday low of $49.50 has helped cancel out the bad news from Motorola, Apple, IBM, Intel and Pfizer among others. A sudden wave of freezing rain across Europe and the United States has pushed up the oil price for the moment but when warmer weather comes in March, oil will probably retest the $50 mark.

China is maintaining its growth rate of 9.5 percent and with the Olympics in 2008 and an Expo in 2010, I cannot see it slowing down appreciably. The Expo in Shanghai is expected to attract 100 million people and the rate of demolition and reconstruction is amazing and so is their advanced technology. I was fascinated watching a series of programs on TV.

India, for the first time, is looking into its caste system, which keeps hundreds of million of Indians in very low jobs and extreme poverty while the higher caste teenagers earn good money in call centers and business outsourcing. This very unfair system deprives the nation of many people who might be talented, given an education. Indians are intelligent and have produced some world-class mathematicians. It is time this antiquated system was abolished. One day, India will overtake China in population, as it does not have a one-child policy. Already a nuclear power, India is destined to become a key player and is already dominant in generic pharmaceuticals.

The Phisix has made a 10-year high but has not yet reached its all-time high. There has been huge foreign buying of MBT since the bank's president forecast a substantially higher profit for 2006. They have also been buying large quantities of ALI, MEG and EDC. Cross sales and block sales have reached record levels. They also bought FPH for 4 days until it was downgraded by REGIS from a BUY to a HOLD with a 1-year target of P70.

The budget deficit will be far below its target of P125 billion, probably around P80 billion. It is just conceivable that the end of 2007 could eliminate the deficit but I do not expect this to happen because a great deal of money will be spent on the elections. But eliminating it by 2008 should not be a problem.

Inflation is expected to fall to as little as 3.3 to 3.9 percent this year, thanks to the plunging price of oil and the strong peso. The 91-day treasury bill rate is so low, as are the bank deposit rates that investors looking for income are now turning to the stock market. This is not a good thing when it is an act of desperation.

China is investing P240 billion in the Philippines to gain access to agricultural commodities such as corn and rice. This will provide much needed capital for rural infrastructure and include technology that will benefit farmers and fishermen. The Chinese will develop 1.2 million hectares of land and may also build an ethanol plant. Agriculture employs 20 percent of the workforce so this will give it a shot in the arm.

China has withdrawn its objection to the inclusion of India, Australia and New Zealand in an Asean free trade area so it will now encompass 3 billion people, half the world's population, with an output of $9 trillion a year. Over the long term, this will be beneficial but it will not be without problems and is far into the future.

In the depressed mining sector, MA has just made a presentation and been granted a permit. Its partner will be Anglo-American but as it will take 3 years to explore, there has been no reaction to the news. VUL has obtained an exploration permit valid for 2 years, renewable if circumstances warrant. APX disclosed that it has been producing gold since Dec. 22 at its Masara mine though its disclosure was 5 days late. The problem, according to the secretary, appears to be due to lack of some documents required by the PSE. I hold no shares in any of the above.

Last week, the newsletter gave ABSP and GLO a zero degree of risk. Since then, ABSP has risen from 18.50 to 20.50 and GLOBE from 1180 to 1290. The degree of risk indicator is the most accurate tool available for short-term trading. There is a completely different system for long-term trading and suitable for large funds.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Stocks continue to surge

SHARE PRICES CLOSED UP 1.82 percent yesterday, at its highest point in almost a decade led by telecom and banking issues, dealers said.

They said investors continued snapping up stocks on the back of the economy's brighter prospects for this year.

The composite index added 56.10 points to the day's high of 3,141.28, off a low of 3,085.18. It was the index's best finish since April 2, 1997, when it settled at 3,162.21.

The broader all-share index rose 31.26 points to 1,952.25.

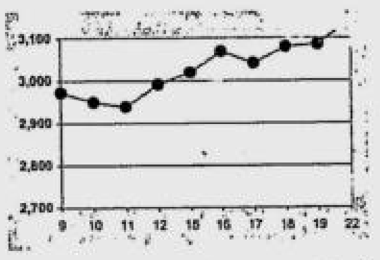
Gainers led losers 95 to 34 with 45 unchanged. Turnover was P2.7 billion, with three billion shares traded.

"The market is being paced by the very positive outlook on the economy and on expectations of higher corporate earnings for last year and this year," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities said investor appetite for equities was further fueled by the upward momentum in the market.

"The index hit a new high, which could bring us back to record levels, and add to that the bullish outlook on the economy. There is no negative news that could spoil the momentum at this point," de Leon added.

The government last week forecast economic growth to hit between 6.1 and 6.7 percent this year as it expects Congress to finally approve the 2007 budget, allowing the Arroyo administration to boost spending on critical infrastructure projects.



Dealers said investors were also hopeful the central bank would cut its key interest rates when it holds its monetary policy-setting meeting on Thursday.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) advanced P50 to P2,600, while rival Globe Telecom climbed P15 to P1,290. Ayala Corp. added P10 to P595 and its unit Bank of the Philippine Islands edged up P2 to P70. *AFP*

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PhilWeb's online sports betting gets Pagcor nod

By Daxim L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED PHILWEB Corp. has received approval from Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) to set up an online sports betting facility that will allow clients to bet on the results of foreign games.

In an interview, PhilWeb president Dennis O. Valdez said the firm would partner with RTG Studio Inc. to provide betting services on all North American sports including basketball, football, baseball, golf, boxing and soccer.

"There are many Filipinos betting [online] on [foreign] sports but that have to bet in dollars and on foreign websites," he said. "RTG will make this available to Filipinos locally."

He said the facility would allow local bettors to place bets on foreign games in pesos through a variety of payment schemes.

"We may start with bank transfers and other methods and we may eventually allow credit cards for a very select group of players," he added.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, PhilWeb said that the contract became effective immediately upon the approval of Pagcor, which regulates all forms of gaming and casino operations in the country.

"[It] covers all Las Vegas betting formats for straight bets such as over/under, points spread, and parlay for all sports including soccer," the company said.

RTG Studio is a wholly owned Philippine subsidiary of Singapore-incorporated RealTime Gaming (Asia) Pte. Ltd. and is affiliated with Atlanta-based software company Real Time Gaming, a leading provider of Internet casino software currently powering more than 70 Internet casinos worldwide.

Valdez said he believed there was a large market for online sports betting in the country, although PhilWeb has yet to come up with firm numbers on the size of the business, which is mainly underground up to now.

"Pagcor will get the lion's share from this," he said. "It's a very good deal for the government."

Treasury bill rates …

From page B1

only P500 million from the 91-day, P1.5 billion from the 182-day, and P2.6 billion from the 364-day bills.

Cruz confirmed reports that the government was planning to issue retail treasury bonds designed solely for overseas Filipino workers, but said details were still being finalized. A bond float for OFWs is expected to address the huge liquidity in the system partly being bloated by the rising income from OFWs.

In a separate briefing, the National Economic and Development Authority highlighted the economic gains recently achieved under the Arroyo administration.

Dennis Arroyo, Neda director for policy and planning, said these indicators included the appreciation of the peso to a six-year high, the slowdown of inflation to its lowest in almost three years, the rise of stock market index to a 10-year high, and the record level of gross international reserves to all-time high.

The peso recently touched 48 to a dollar following huge inflows of dollars from portfolio investments. Inflation eased to 4.3 percent in December last year due to decelerating prices of oil in the global market and the stronger peso.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 22, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.2	7.2	7	7	5,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	46	48	46	48	2,298,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68	70.5	68	70	2,283,600
China Banking Corp.	695	695	690	690	111,740
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	800
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.48	0.49	0.47	0.48	3,190,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	82.5	84	82	84	150,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59	59	58	58.5	3,241,800
Philippine National Bank	48	50.5	48	49.5	111,100
Phil. Savings Bank	49	49	49	49	200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	32	34.5	31.5	34	528,500
Security Bank Corp.	68.5	70	68.5	70	226,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	55	59.5	55	59.5	41,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	100,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	38,000
First Abacus Financial	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	70,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31.5	31.5	30.5	30.5	9,500
Manulife Financial Corp.	1620	1630	1615	1630	2,950
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.54	1.54	179,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	300	320	300	320	305,010
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2030	2030	2030	2030	960
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.64	305,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	20,319,000
First Gen Corp.	56	56	55	55.5	863,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	72	73.5	72	72	1,180,700
Manila Electric Co. A	64	66.5	64	66	546,500
Manila Electric Co. B	65.5	67.5	65.5	67	966,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.2	9.3	3,729,000
Petron Corp.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.15	4,493,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	720,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.26	9,243,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	15,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21	21	21	21	10,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43	43.5	43	43.5	519,400
RFM Corp.	1.28	1.36	1.28	1.34	2,457,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	474,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	300,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	63	63.5	78,400
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	74.5	75	238,800
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.12	2.12	583,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19	19	18.5	18.5	2,064,500
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.24	1.28	1.24	1.28	14,033,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.1	4.25	4.1	4.25	1,668,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	2.8	3	2.8	3	308,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.3	8.5	8.2	8.3	2,973,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.3	4.6	4.3	4.6	4,468,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5.1	4.95	5	4,054,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	70,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.75	0.77	0.74	0.76	36,770,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	2,910,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	28,000,000
Ayala Corp.	585	600	585	595	219,690
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	50,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	9.2	9.2	9.1	9.1	316,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	8	8	8	8	1,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.08	0.0725	0.0775	102,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3	3	2.95	3	148,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.39	4,360,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	86,600,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	373,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	6,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.65	2.75	2.6	2.7	56,463,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.2	7.4	1,874,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.6	5	4.6	4.95	3,271,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	20,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.42	2.6	2.42	2.5	860,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12.25	445,000
Medco Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	500,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	5	5.1	4.9	5	710,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.06	2.06	2	2.04	1,889,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	30,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	450,000
Solid Group Inc	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.16	0.16	1,200,000
Sm Investments Corp.	340	347.5	340	347.5	283,680
South China Resources Inc.	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.08	409,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	40,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	8,560,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	150,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16	16.5	16	16.5	2,299,400
Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	959,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.8	1.84	1.8	1.82	5,738,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	590,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.4	284,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	400,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.84	1.84	1.8	1.8	50,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	110,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	840,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.67	0.72	0.67	0.72	86,690,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	620,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.075	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	6,900,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	3,940,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.205	0.21	0.2	0.205	1,800,000
Interport Res.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	51,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	50,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.5	0.53	0.5	0.53	1,190,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.82	0.85	0.8	0.85	9,870,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.34	2.38	2.3	2.36	24,832,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	25,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	250,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	430,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.5	15.5	15	15	5,829,500
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.68	9,750,000
SM Development Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	1,361,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	6,326,100
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	110,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.11	0.105	0.11	900,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20.25	20.75	20.25	20.75	85,200
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1	1	1	1	4,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2	2	1.98	1.98	6,198,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1290	1295	1290	1290	30,440
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.5	6.8	6.5	6.7	6,049,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2550	2605	2550	2600	130,060
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	60,650,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	19,800,000
Ionics Inc.	2.48	2.55	2.48	2.48	789,000
Ipvg Corp.	4.15	4.15	4	4	397,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	10,400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	23,100,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.4	2.42	2.38	2.42	191,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	31,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.5	29,200
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.06	2.06	1,835,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3.5	3	3.4	134,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	200,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	180,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	21,000
Far Eastern University	840	840	840	840	190
iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	38,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	3.35	4.2	3.35	4.2	18,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.1	221,000
Paxys Inc.	21.5	21.75	21.5	21.5	144,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	739,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	324,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	109,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	1,041,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.4	9.5	9.4	9.5	40,000
Benguet Corp B	28	29.5	28	29.5	4,900
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	8,650,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	1,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.028	0.026	0.027	610,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.031	0.031	0.028	0.029	552,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	166,500,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.65	3.75	3.65	3.75	3,857,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	15	15.25	15	15	377,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.7	550,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.58	1.7	1.58	1.68	28,147,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	3,630,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.013	0.011	0.013	426,900,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	265,600,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.1	2,802,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.1	1.16	1.1	1.1	1,717,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.5	279,600

CURRENCIES

January 22, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.771367	1.000000	48.8280
Japan	Yen	0.006363	0.008249	0.4028
United Kingdom	Pound	1.523141	1.974600	96.4158
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098820	0.128110	6.2554
Switzerland	Franc	0.618231	0.801475	39.1344
Canada	Dollar	0.658219	0.853315	41.6657
Singapore	Dollar	0.501735	0.650449	31.7601
Australia	Dollar	0.608910	0.789391	38.5444
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.046012	2.652450	129.5138
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205676	0.266638	13.0194
Brunei	Dollar	0.500108	0.648340	31.6571
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021901	0.028393	1.3864
UAE	Dirham	0.210033	0.272287	13.2952
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.296400	63.3006
Korea	Won	0.000824	0.001068	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.099226	0.128636	6.2810
Argentina	Peso	0.250460	0.324696	15.8543
Brazil	Real	0.362314	0.469704	22.9347
Denmark	Kroner	0.134183	0.173955	8.4939
India	Rupee	0.017471	0.022650	1.1060
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220454	0.285796	13.9548
Mexico	New Peso	0.070956	0.091988	4.4916
New Zealand	Dollar	0.536193	0.695120	33.9413
Norway	Kroner	0.119671	0.155142	7.5753
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012700	0.016464	0.8039
South Africa	Rand	0.108433	0.140572	6.8638
Sweden	Kroner	0.109858	0.142420	6.9541
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023514	0.030483	1.4884

Garbage correction

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE WHOLE COUNTRY SHOULD BE JUMPing for joy. Why, Gloriaetta herself already declared—on national television, mind you—that, thanks to the economic management of this cute administration, we should all be rich by now. Thank you, boss!

I am not kidding—our president boasted that economic growth under this cute administration was benefiting everybody, including the guys down here in my barangay.

Still, a text message went around over the weekend, talking about a different kind of public gratitude to this cute administration.

In a recent concert at the Philippine International Convention Center, perhaps as a gesture of thanks, the audience greeted Gloriaetta with some resounding "boos"—twice, in fact, before and after the concert.

That's how happy the whole country is, I guess, with the way this cute administration is getting rid of graft and corruption.

***

Good governance, i.e. less graft and corruption, according to the press statement from the influential Makati Business Club, is still the order of the day.

And that's what the acting mayor of Pasay City, Councilor Allan Panaligan, showed us as an example, when he recently cut the city's contract cost for garbage collection by P100 million a year.

As everybody knows, particularly the owners of "night spots" in the city, the Ombudsman suspended Pasay Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad, who is known simply as "Peewee," together with Vice Mayor Antonio Calixto and 10 councilors, precisely over the city's garbage collection contract.

The only thing that Panaligan did differently was, well, he conducted an open and honest public bidding.

Under Peewee, the city government awarded contracts to five companies without public bidding, which were simply renewed every month, as a way to go around the law as "emergency contracts."

The total cost to the city government of the Peewee gang's contracts reached an astonishing P278 million a year.

Now, compare to that the new contracts inked by the city under Panaligan, amounting to only P177 million a year, and you get an idea of what the Makati business people meant by the importance of good governance.

The interesting thing about the new contract is the entry of a company called Harley Construction, which got the biggest slice of the contract at P87 million, having submitted the lowest bid. And yet it never figured in the Peewee gang's contract.

Two others, namely, Greenline Onyx and R. M. Maintenance Services, were the other winners in the public bidding, although the same two companies were also in the Peewee gang's line-up, which only goes to show the fairness of the process called public bidding. You know—everybody gets a crack!

***

It seems that BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Bunag just found a self-proclaimed evaluator of the bureau's performance in the person of Vic Endriga, the treasurer of Quezon City.

He claimed that in Quezon City alone, the city hall (with Endriga as treasurer, of course) already had more than 60,000 registered business establishments, while the BIR only had 30,000 or so.

Meaning, really, that the BIR was not doing its job in the campaign called "tax mapping." Endriga probably had a point, right? Wrong!

According to official records, the BIR already registered more than 130,000 business establishments in Quezon City. In other words, Endriga was wrong. Dead wrong!

Our hero, instead of owning up to his error, even waxed sarcastic by asking the BIR to share the list of the business establishments with the city treasury.

And everybody thought this interloper was the one helping the BIR?

Now, word is going around in business circles that somebody in the Palace is pushing for Endriga to replace Bunag at the BIR.

My info, however, is that Endriga was also the object of Department of Finance investigation under the so-called RIPS, or the Revenue Integrity Protection Service, which investigates allegation of corruption.

On the other hand, Bunag is the BIR commissioner who, although he has no direct political link to Gloriaetta, nevertheless enjoys the support of business community simply for doing his job.

Everybody marveled at the BIR's performance last year. It raised its collection from P500 billion in 2005 to P617 billion in 2006, or an increase of P117 billion.

Now, if you ask Buñag how the BIR did it, he probably will probably tell you that the increase came about because BIR personnel took less of the tax collection for themselves.

In short, less graft and corruption!

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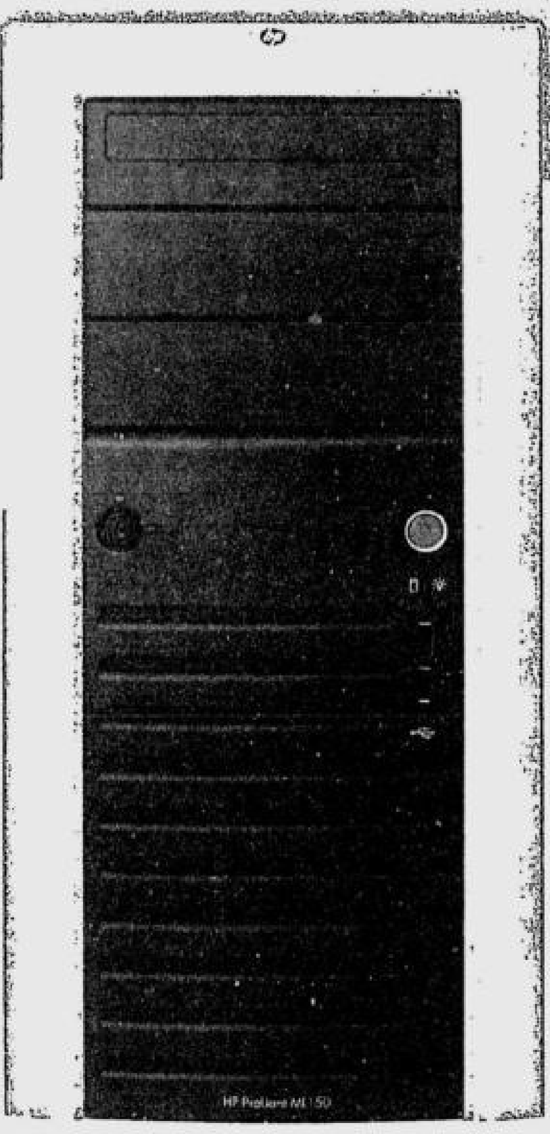

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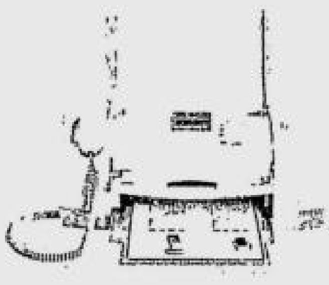

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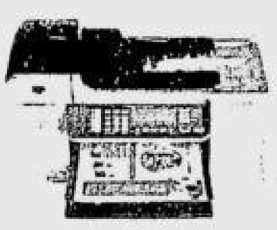

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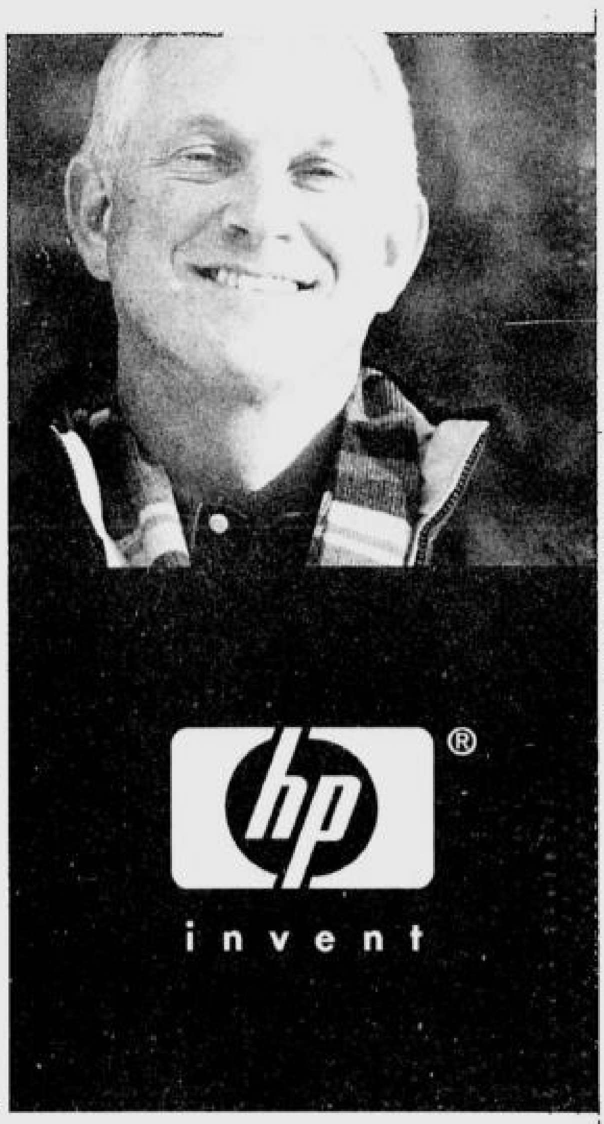

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WORK PREPARATORS

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Kong Weng Yap	Project Analyst
TAI YI MANUFACTURING LTD. CO. 190 Gen. Luis St., Novaliches, Quezon City	Yen-Tsung Liu	Operations Manager
THE THOMSON (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION Ayala Life-FGU Bldg., 6811 Ayala Ave., Bel-Air Village, Makati City	Xiaojing Yu	Language Specialist- (COG Fundamentals – Mandarin)
CENTURY PARK HOTEL (MARANAW HOTELS & RESORT CORP.) 599 P. Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila	Shinji Furukawa	Executive Chef
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yong Tai Chai	Project Analyst
RECYCLE MASTER JAPAN TRADER INC. Sabrina Compound, Km. 19, West Service Rd., Marcelo Green, Parañaque City	Shinji Maruta	Chief Operating Officer
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Christopher Carl Miller	Principal Solution Officer
SHLEE CORPORATION 26 A J. Elizalde St., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Kyoungah Kim (w/o Kum)	Program Manager
TRIYONGJADE RESOURCES CORP. U-3004 30/F The Peak Condo., 107 Leviste St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City	Myeong Ye Kang	General Manager
BAYVIEW TECHNOLOGIES INC. 43/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chang Hee Yee	Korean Business Development Consultant
GHAITH'S GLOBAL MANPOWER SERVICES, INC. Penthouse 1 Pierre N Paul Bldg., A. Flores St. cor. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila	Fouad Ghais	International Marketing – Philippine Representative
YUANHE PHILS. CO. INC. Victoria Wave, Special Economic Zone, Barangay 186, North Caloocan City	Fangwei Li	Branch Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–Jan. 23, 2007)

More CLASSIFIED ADS on pages...

PMAP A7
Bases Conversion Development Authority A23
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Province of Bukidnon A23

PMAP 522nd GMM and annual induction

GUIDED BY ITS 2007 THEME OF "EXPLORING beyond. Delivering results," The Personnel Management Association of the Philippines opens the year with its 522nd General Membership Meeting and Annual Induction Rites on January 31, 2007, 11:30 am, Wednesday at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City. Guest of honor for the said event is Secretary Jesli A. Lapus of the Department of Education who will be speaking on the topic: "People Development for a Competitive Philippines." Moreover, the Honorable Senator Franklin M. Drilon will be present to induct PMAP's officers for 2007. Fees for the event are set at Php 800 for PMAP members and Php 900 for non-PMAP members. A 5% early bird discount can be availed by company representatives who register and pay one week in advance. Additionally, individual members could avail a 10% discount for a complete 10 months advance paid reservation. For further details, interested parties may contact the PMAP professional staff at telephone numbers 726-1581/88/32 or through email: pmap@pmap.org.ph.

EPERFORMAX INAUGURATION

Shown at the ribbon cutting during the inauguration of ePerformax newest floor in BPI Buendia Center, Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City are from left: Chair Jose Roberto Delgado; President Teresa Hartsaw and Harvey Johnson, VP of Customer Service for The Sharper Image.

ST. PETER LIFE PLAN CELEBRATES 36TH YEAR

Shown are Anvil Awardee for Excellence, Francis J. Kong (left) and marketing guru, Enrique M. Soriano III (right) during the celebration of St. Peter Life Plan Inc, the leading Pre-need DeathCare Memorial Plan Provider, its 36th year in public service at the Bellevue Hotel Alabang, Muntinlupa City. The event highlighted their National Convention and Awards Night and bannered the annual theme, "Panatang St. Peterian – Kahusayan, Kaunlaran, Kabayanihan!" or "PSP-3K!" The famous business inspirational speaker and Anvil Awardee for Excellence, Francis J. Kong and Ateneo Graduate School of Business' marketing guru, Enrique M. Soriano III, inspired and fired-up the participants with words of wisdom and innovative marketing strategies.

OBITUARIES

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."
(John 3:16)

LEONARDO JOSE REMIGIO

of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte
(born January 18, 1933)

Peacefully joined his Creator last January 17,2007.

His loving wife **Nenita**; his children and grandchildren: **Donald & May**, Marianne, Annalyn and Regine, **Manuelito & Jane**, and EJ; and **Celimar Martin (Bing) & Alice**, Razel and Kevin; his brothers, sisters, in-laws, nephews and nieces, relatives, friends and associates, respectfully request the pious readers to lift up to the Lord in prayer our dear Nards.

His remains lie at the Remigio residence at 3 P. Paterno St., Laoag City.

Final rites will be held on Wednesday, January 24, 2007, with a celebration of the Holy Mass at the St. William's Cathedral at 9:00 a.m.

Interment will follow at the Maharlika Memorial Garden.

OBITUARIES

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." **John 11:25-26**

PERFECTO MARTINEZ PEREZ

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 22, 2007 at the age of 62.

Please pray for his bereaved family: his wife – **Linda**; his children – **Perly**, **Ethelbert**, **Mapeth**, **EJ** and **Hajji**; his in-laws and grandchildren; and his sister – **Lisa**.

His body lies in state at Ipil Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque.

Cremation will be on Friday, January 26, 2007 at 10:00 a.m., after the final service at 8:30 a.m, also at the La Funeraria Paz.

"I am the way, the truth
and the life.
No one comes to the
Father except
through Me." **John 14:6**

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MEGAMALL: 635-0219; 635-0220

Dominador "Ka Ador" P. Garcia

of Calumpit, Bulacan

Peacefully joined the Lord
on January 20, 2007 at the age of 79.

His wife – **Priscila**; loving children **Norma & Cris**, **Techot & Mel**, **Dory & Eddie**, **Caloy & Amy**, **Lisa & Larry**; his loving 12 grandchildren & 5 great-grandchildren, brothers & sisters, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Homes, Quezon Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on January 24, 2007 at Manila North Cemetery, Manila after the 8:00 a.m. service by DMUMC

"I am the Resurrection and the Life" John 11:25

REMEDIOS A. JOSE

Now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord.
She joined our Creator
on January 20, 2007 at the U.S.T. Hospital.

She leaves treasured memories in the hearts of her sisters and brother – **Julie J. Sta. Cruz, Purita A. de Guia, Nellie J. Carlos, Donnie J. Salvador, Pacita J. Dungca, Teresita de Guzman (†), Miguel and Letty Jose**, her nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Santuario de San Jose Chapel in East Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Wednesday, January 24, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 2:00 P.M. Mass at the Santuario de San Jose Church, Greenhills.

ROBERTO RAYMOND OBLEFIAS PAGDANGANAN

now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord.

His father, **Secretary Roberto M. Pagdanganan**; mother, **Susana**; sister, **Ma. Rossana**; brother-in-law, **Michael Allan Sicat**; nieces, **Roxanne & Mika,** and nephew, **Enzo**; and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie at Sta. Maria Della Strada Parish in Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City and will be transferred after an 8:00 a.m. mass on Wednesday, January 24, to Sto. Niño Chapel in Calumpit, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday at Calumpit Memorial Park in Bulacan.

In lieu of flowers, his family would appreciate donations to the Raymond Pagdanganan Youth Development Foundation.

BUSINESS

Gasoline, diesel prices seen to drop further in coming weeks

By Abigail L. Ho

CONSUMERS MAY EXPECT PRICES OF gasoline, diesel and kerosene to go down in the coming weeks as world oil prices continue to soften, according to the Department of Energy.

The price of cooking gas should also decrease by next month, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla yesterday said in a statement.

International prices of directly imported finished fuel products have dropped faster than imported crude, so oil firms that do not have refineries here are expected to take the lead in reducing prices, he said.

The country now has only two oil refiners, Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. The rest of the local oil companies import refined petroleum products, accounting for around 50 percent of the fuel sold in the country.

According to DOE data, the regional benchmark Dubai crude had plunged to an average of $51.75 a barrel as of Jan. 19 from $58.68 a barrel in December.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products also significantly dropped to an average of $61.48 a barrel in the first 19 days of January, from last month's $68.16 a barrel.

MOPS-based diesel slipped to a $68.49-a-barrel average in the Jan. 1-19 period, after surging to a price of $72.20 a barrel last month.

Lotilla noted that while the December averages for Dubai crude and MOPS-based unleaded gasoline and diesel were higher than in November, local oil firms did not increase fuel prices at all that month.

Also, local prices of liquefied petroleum gas do not reflect the full impact of the higher January international contract price of the commodity, he said.

The price of LPG in the international market reached $548.50 per metric ton (MT) this month, from $490.50 per MT in December, and $464 per MT in November.

Indians coming to RP, says DOT

Gov't works on better rates

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MORE TOURISTS FROM INDIA are expected to visit the country starting February as the Department of Tourism partners with major airlines to give better rates to holiday makers from New Delhi.

Arrivals from India would come in the wake of pioneering direct flights from the Russian Far East that started earlier this month.

At least 400 escaped the harsh winter in Vladivostok and Kranscyarsk in Siberia to visit Manila and onward to Cebu and Boracay via chartered flights.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said in an interview the DOT was working with Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific to give preferential rates to Indian visitors.

"Unlike the Russians, the Indians will have to take regular commercial flights, but the come-on is preferential rates," Durano explained. "This is what we will work out with the airlines through the Travel Mart that would be held next month."

He added that the DOT needed to tap non-traditional tourist markets if it was to realize its goal of 5 million arrivals by 2010.

"Our target of 2.6 million for 2006 is just about halfway to that," Durano said. "More arrivals from India, which usually make up 18,000 a year or less than a percent of total arrivals, can give us a big a push (to 5 million)."

He said Indian tourists love to shop, but the lack of direct flights and the additional cost of traveling to the Philippines make the Indians stop instead at Singapore, Bangkok or Hong Kong.

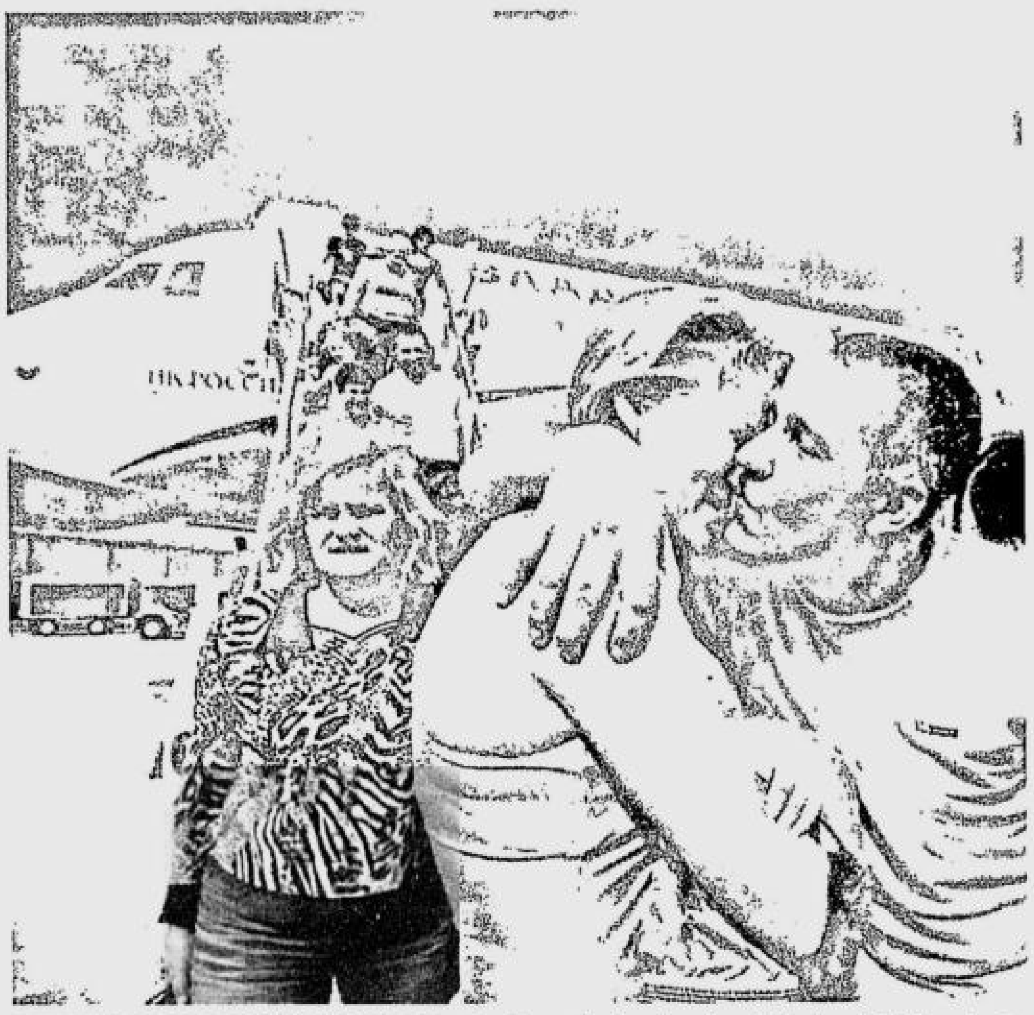
"We can offer them all kinds of shopping experience that they are looking for—from (low-cost, flea-market type) 168 to (high-end) 6750," Durano said.

Also, the tourism chief said his agency would continue promotional efforts with the other market that has a big potential-China.

"There is an existing run from Shanghai to Clark via Shanghai Air but access is very limited," he said. "We are working with the airline on possible additional flights to other destinations like Cebu."

Durano said the DOT expected between 167,000 and 170,000 arrivals from the mainland, an increase of between 30 percent and 40 percent from the previous level.

Results from the DOT's year-round promotional activities across the globe were favorable, but Durano said growth at this point would depend on the expansion of available rooms and airline seats.



FROM VLADIVOSTOK WITH LOVE. Tourists from the Russian city of Vladivostok disembark in Manila before proceeding to Boracay. More and more tourists are now arriving from different parts of the world. The Philippine government is looking at ways to make it cheaper for tourists, especially from India, to visit the country.

JESS YUSON

Fitch in town to rate RP's fiscal gains

HOPING TO RATCHET UP THE COUNTRY'S credit standing, the Arroyo administration is expected to banner recent gains in the macroeconomic front before visiting members of international ratings firm Fitch Ratings.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz yesterday told reporters that members of the government's economic team would be meeting with officials from Fitch today.

The meeting, to be held at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas office in Manila, is expected to center on inquiries from the credit rating firm as to the fiscal developments of the country.

Cruz said the government does not want to make any assumptions on the probable decision of Fitch on the country's credit rating, but noted that even the financial markets are optimistic about the country's credit standing.

"The market is really upbeat," Cruz said in a briefing after yesterday's Treasury bills auction. "As you know, the market is also anticipating certain moves, maybe even on the credit-rating end, because there are credit rating agencies in town."

The government has set a budget deficit limit of P125 billion in 2006, better than the P146.8 billion actual deficit recorded in 2005. But fiscal authorities said the deficit for last year could have settled at a much lower figure of only P62 billion due to tight spending and higher-than-expected collection of revenues.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves earlier said the administration would not focus its attention on getting an upgrade on the country's credit rating, but would rather implement measures that would help lower its borrowing cost, trim down the deficit and reduce its debts.

Teves had said an improvement in the country's credit rating would naturally follow if macroeconomic fundamentals improve.

Last year, outlook on the Philippines' credit standing by all three major credit-rating firms—Fitch, Moody's Investors Service, Standard & Poor's—improved from "negative" to "stable."

Still, the country's credit standing with all three ratings firms are below investment grade.

Michelle V. Remo

For ship industry to sail, NDC urged to float ₱6B in bonds

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO ASK the National Development Co. (NDC) to float about P6 billion worth of bonds this year to develop the country's shipping industry.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said proceeds of the bond float may be initially used to fund development projects in the shipping industry while the government is still waiting for the approval of a $1-billion grant from the Japanese government.

"Shipping should be the next big thing after mining," Neri yesterday said in a briefing held at the National Economic and Development Auhority (Neda) office in Pasig City. "We (the Philippines) are an archipelago, and there is no reason for us not to be one of the major players in the shipping industry."

Neri said the funds to be raised from the proposed bond float would be used to buy a few shipping vessels which would be leased to private investors.

Should the Japanese government approve the Philippine government's request for a $1-billion loan, then the foreign assistance could be used to purchase more shipping vessels and fund other projects for the shipping industry.

Neri said the NDC bond float would be an alternative way of raising initial funds for shipping projects.

He said the Neda would likewise ask the Development Bank of the Philippines to divert some funds for nautical highway projects to purchase ships. As of last year, DBP had about P16 billion worth of funds to finance nautical highway projects, Neri said.

Michelle V. Remo

Gov't firm to manage Diwalwal resources

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS DISclosed plans to put up a corporation that will manage the mineral resources in Mt. Diwalwal, and then offer shares of the firm to the public to generate funds for the operation.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said the corporation may be a spin-off of the Natural Resources Mining Development Corp. (NRMC), which is a unit of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in charge of boosting activity of the mining industry.

According to initial estimates, around P50 billion worth of gold resources may lie in just a portion of the 7,000-hectare Diwalwal reservation, located in Davao province.

Copper and other mineral resources may likewise be found in Diwalwal, Neri said in a briefing yesterday.

"An initial public offering (IPO) may be the best route," Neri said, referring to the government's intention to generate investments for the Diwalwal operation.

The government plans to tap the Development Bank of the Philippines and the Land Bank of the Philippines, both state-owned financial institutions, to serve as financial advisers in setting up a corporation for public listing.

Neri, who is also director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), said that to attract private sector investments in perceivably risky projects, such as mining operations in Diwalwal, the government should take charge of operations and clear out all hindrances in the former conflict-torn area.

Once operations become smooth and profitable, then investments would start pouring in, Neri said.

"Government should not be doing this for long," he added. "It is only supposed to jumpstart a business and, later on, give this up to the private sector."

Now that questions about rights over Diwalwal have been cleared and violence in the area addressed, Neri said, investing in exploration projects in the area could be promoted.

In the 1980s, there were about 30,000 people engaged in illegal small-scale mining activities. Large mining firms reported to have claims in parts of Diwalwal also fueled the conflict.

But the Supreme Court issued a decision saying that mining operations in the Diwalwal Mineral Reservation Area lies within the full control of the executive branch of the government.

The plan to create a spin-off firm of NRMDC, and whose shares will be offered to the public, is seen to be a more viable move than the suggestion for the NRMDC to seek for a joint-venture partner to engage in mining projects in Diwalwal.

NRMDC estimates that the mining site may have a mine life of 20 years.

NRMDC said that, once mining projects have started at the site, investments from Australia, China, and the United States are expected to come in. The NRMDC earlier that investors from these countries had already made initial inquiries about the site.

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BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

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36th Annual Membership Meeting and Foundation Day

36 Years of Developing and Building Human Capital

> *Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave*
>
> **-- Henry Peter Brougham**

I am pleased to greet and thank all of you on the 36th anniversary of PBSP. This year, our theme is "Building Human Capital." This topic is meant to attract business-sector attention to, and build support for, education—a critical need of our times. At the same time, we hope to contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set forth by the United Nations, particularly those on universal access to education and poverty alleviation, and to participate in the observance of the UN-declared Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

Through the ages, societies have always valued learning as a potent tool for developing their richest resource, which is people. It is therefore rather dismaying to note that according to UNESCO estimates, practically half of the world's population in this so-called information era remains illiterate—unable to read, write, and perform even simple mathematical operations. This condemns them to powerlessness, helplessness, and shackles them with the chains of penury and poverty. In the Philippines, there is a lingering suspicion that our functional literacy rate of 85 percent may be overstated.

We all know the debilitating effects of the lack of functional literacy on a country's development, productivity and competitiveness. Alarmed by this, the corporate sector recently formed the Philippine Business for Education (PBEd) to increase private sector stakeholdership in education. Earlier, a group of leaders, prodded by recent Time Magazine-awardee Ms Eugenia Apostol, formed the Fund for Worldwide People Power to make education rate high on everyone's agenda.

PBSP certainly regards education, which former President Nelson Mandela described as the most powerful weapon to change the world, as an urgent priority. In 1993, reacting to a Congressional Report on the country's dismal state of education, it organized the CEO Consensus Group on Business and Education to respond strategically to the deficiencies of our educational system. In support of the MDG, education became a major program starting in 2003. And it must be said that in all its 36 years, the Foundation has supported—and encouraged its membership in their individual capacities to support—this critical requirement for development through various initiatives. Some of the recent ones are programs such as Adopt-a-School, EMC2, Science and Computer Laboratory, and other interventions like feeding and health activities for school children, construction of school houses, provision of school chairs and tables as well as school supplies, support for dual-tech vocational skills programs, and training and scholarships for teachers. In Mindanao, PBSP has supported review classes for in-service preparing for the Licensure Examination for Teachers or LET. It is gratifying to note that our investment in education in the Mindanao region has made a dent on the enrollment profile of public elementary schools, particularly in Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Saranggani. The schools there have experienced enrollment increases of up to 237 percent. Additionally, we saw a dramatic improvement in both academic performance and school attendance, with practically a zero rate in school absences and dropouts being achieved...

Concerned as we are with improving the quality of basic education, we also recognize the importance of alternative streams of education in developing the country's human capital. This is especially true for those who do not have the opportunity to enter the formal school system, such as the out-of-school youth and underemployed/ unemployed adults.

To ensure that this group's right to education and contribution to national growth and development are not overlooked, the United Nations has declared 2005-2014 as the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. In this regard, since its founding, PBSP has addressed the special needs of this group by supporting programs in adult education and functional literacy, vocational skills training, cooperative development, community education, community credit, health and nutrition, community participation and leadership, and mothers' classes for family welfare, among others. Indeed, it may be said that these programs are the precursors to our current SMEC, STEP-UP, TMP (Technology Management Program) and our ARM programs where we continue to reach out to the disadvantaged, especially the unemployed and those mothers who have to help find supplemental income for their families on top of their daily household duties. From the start, we have believed that the development of the community and the alleviation of poverty depend on the functioning of citizens. Thus, our financial assistance has always been accompanied with grants for education and training, institution building, and capability building. A large-scale USAID-supported program that we are currently implementing—the TB Linc or Linking Initiatives and Networking to Control TB—demonstrates our conviction that education is the key to preventing and controlling the disease.

And as connectivity has become both a requirement and an advantage in global and personal relations, PBSP continues to help the disadvantaged by seeing to it that they overcome the information divide. Thus, with substantial help from our membership, we have stepped up our efforts to use information technology as a means to poverty alleviation. Through our Farmers' Information Technology Services, for example, we have helped farmers use the Internet to increase their production and competitiveness. In the school system, we have provided computers and laboratories, trained students to be computer-literate, assisted schools to integrate IT into their curriculum, and improved teachers' instructional skills by giving them access to these important tools of connectivity.

In all this, we are manifesting what the private sector can do to solve one of our country's most crucial concerns. We are showing the need for and the positive results of public-private partnerships, social investments, and volunteerism in strengthening both the hardware and the software of our educational system.

Indeed, education cannot be left to government alone. The whole community must see it as one of its most important obligations. The private sector, for its part, must see the value of investing in it too, keeping in mind always that an educated citizenry means the availability of quality manpower and, ultimately, of a broader market for our products. After all, an investment in building human capital is ultimately an investment in ourselves—it is an altruistic and pragmatic imperative at the same time.

I would like to thank you for your most valuable contributions that have made this fiscal year productive and rewarding. That said, may I appeal to you for an even greater contribution in the next fiscal year particularly against the backdrop of our most recent natural disasters, and as we enter the new year with a renewed and expanded agenda to help our countrymen.

Mabuhay!

Excerpt from the Chairman's Message, PBSP Annual Report 2007

> Concerned as we are with improving the quality of basic education, we also recognize the importance of alternative streams of education in developing the country's human capital

Warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) as you hold your 36th Annual Membership Meeting and Foundation Day.

Your 36 years of the PBSP has been a catalyst for social change and progress particularly in the Philippine countryside. I commend your substantial efforts to educate and help uplift the status of our people from poverty. Combining business and social responsibility is not an easy task but you have shown that it can be done.

I welcome your taking up education and the building of human capital as the theme of your anniversary because this underscores your concern for the development of our human resources.

I hope you will continue to be my administration's partner in our centerpiece program of reducing poverty and improving the quality of lives of our people.

May your next 30 years be just as prolific and rewarding.
Mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

PBSP is inviting all member companies, partners and donors to attend its 36th Anniversary on January 23, Tuesday, 4:00 p.m. at the Renaissance Makati City Hotel. For more information, contact 527-7741 to 48 or Email at pbsp.org.ph

Enterprise Development through business advising

WHILE SOME PEOPLE SEARCH FOR signs of life in the Philippine economy, more people believe that focusing on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) development gives the country its much needed boost. The MSME sector is considered to be the backbone of the country's economy since it makes up 99.2 percent of all registered firms nationwide. It employs 70 percent of the labor force and contributes 32 percent to the economy. Focusing on MSMEs helps ensure that a more equitable distribution of income is made available to more citizens. It is also a viable business track for the dispersion of more economic activities in the countryside. Viewed from this angle, MSME development can be considered a very potent force in the country's long-standing war against poverty.

To broaden its Enterprise Development thrust, the Philippine Business for Social Progress established the Corporate Volunteers for Enterprise Development (CVED) Program in partnership with the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) and supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). PBSP's CVED Program extends assistance to MSMEs by making business advisory services available and affordable to Filipino entrepreneurs through the help of Filipino volunteer expert advisers. CVED matches entrepreneurs from among its roster of advisers with the view to ultimately grow their business, thereby contributing to generating jobs and alleviating poverty.

The program provides a venue for entrepreneurs to work directly and interact with a volunteer expert adviser. Advice focuses on a specific business problem whose solution is spelt out in a work plan drawn up by the adviser and agreed to by the entrepreneur.

Malow's Meat Products is one of the small enterprise-clients of the program. The small Kapampangan company established two years ago specializes in processed meat products such as hotdogs, *tocino*, ham and *longganisa*. Upon hearing about the program, the company enlisted the help of CVED.

"We had to ask for help because our business can benefit from advice," owner Marcial Alviz admits. "We want to be among the top producers of processed meat in Pampanga, if not the whole region."

Rising to the call for help of a fellow Kapampangan, Mother Earth Products Inc's CEO Renato Tayag volunteered to assist Malow's in its sales and marketing. "It wasn't such a hard decision to make. Marcial and I knew each other from the Pampanga Association of Meat Processors Inc (PAMPRO) where we are both members."

Malow's Meat Products requested for assistance on identifying new markets, developing promotion and distribution strategies and improving product packaging and labeling.

Meanwhile, Tayag's company definitely had the competence required to offer business advice. Mother Earth Products Inc started in 1984 as a manufacturer, producer, and trader of agri-based products in Barangay Pampanga, Angeles City. Expanded sales motivated the company to establish an "AA" abattoir with cold storage facilities and expand its products to fresh and frozen beef and pork in addition to their processed meat like *tocino*, hotdog, and ham. It also started to develop other products such as *sisig*, hotdog and beef franks varieties, *tapa* and *longganisa*, ham varieties, smoked meat products. In 2002, the company inaugurated the first "AAA" abattoir in Central Luzon.

When asked if Tayag felt any hesitation to help a potential market competitor, he gamely answered, "We share resources, suppliers, and now technical know-how. But we have different target markets. My company supplies meat to malls and groceries. Malow's supplies to local wet markets. But we are both present in Region 3 and in Manila." He also quipped, "And besides, we don't share recipes."

The changes implemented by Malow's have led to increased investment and sales. As further proof of its growth, Malow's is currently undertaking an expansion plan: it is providing more space and equipment and hiring additional workers to accommodate its increasing orders.

"The CVED Program now has 428 volunteer experts and has helped around 100 firms improve their business," explained Felix Tonog, the CVED Program's Area Manager for Luzon.

As part of PBSP's thrust to educate and inform its members of the various programs which they support through their membership contribution, a visit to Malow's factory was organized for them. The event was attended by representatives from Airlift Asia Foundation, Diwa Learning Systems, Isla, Lipana & Co, Oriental & Motolite Corp, Punongbayan & Araullo, The Bookmark and The Cravings Group of Companies. The group also visited other SME partners in Pampanga including, Naguit Pottery, Emy's Sweets and Candies and Mallari's Nursery Furniture.

The participants showed great enthusiasm in the CVED Program and praised its innovativeness. The concept of business helping smaller businesses highlights the *bayanihan* spirit of Filipinos and serves as a model for other organizations that assist MSMEs throughout the country. In its totality, the program can be considered as one of the more viable ways of helping our country reduce poverty in that by making MSMEs stable, jobs can become available. Through the CVED Program, PBSP has shown that the Foundation has truly remained faithful to its commitment to "help people help themselves."

PBSP Member Companies hold exceptional pottery made by Naguit Pottery, another partner in the CVED Program.

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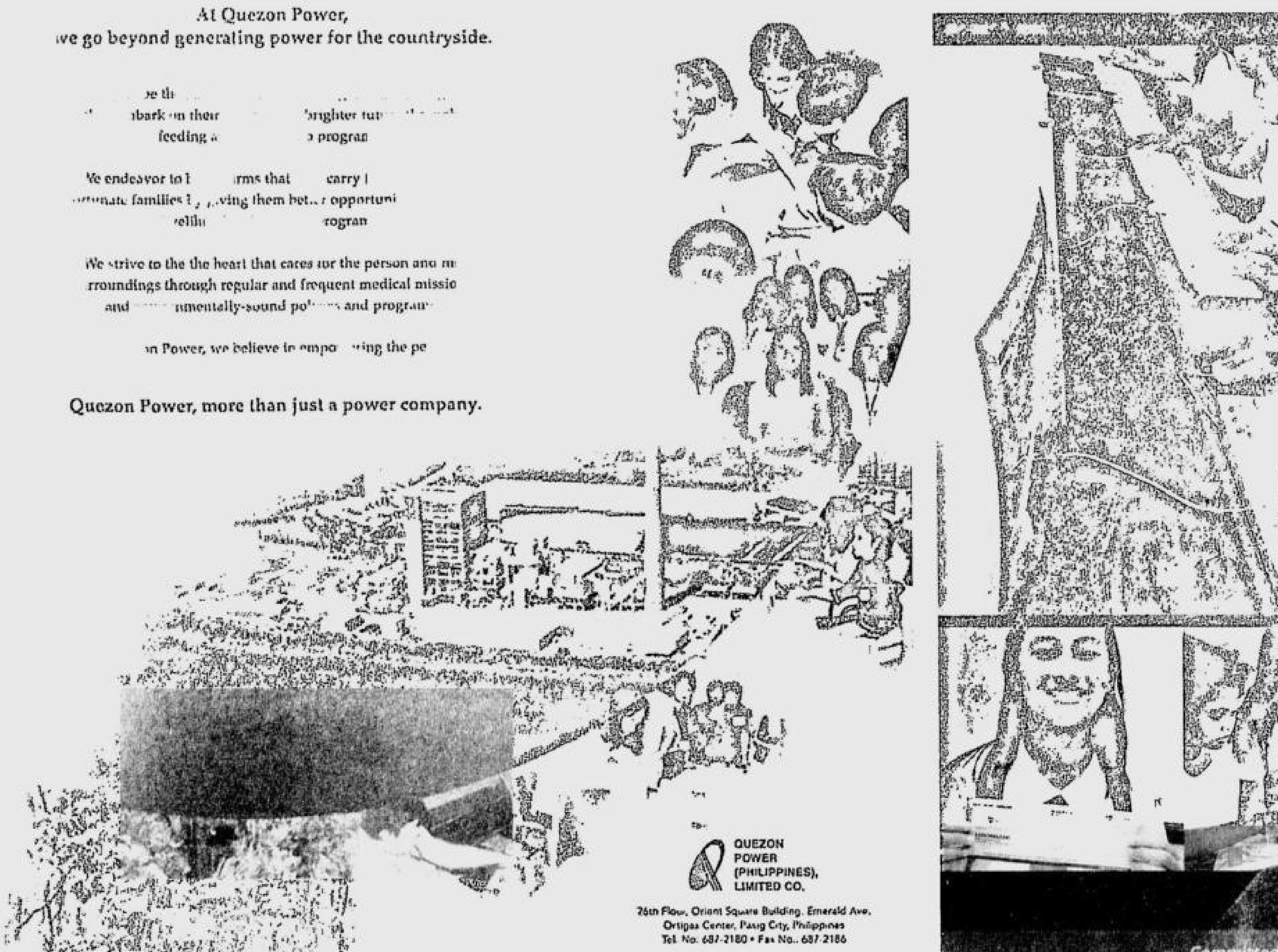

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Creating a better future for the Filipino children

JOHN MICHAEL DEL VALLE, Hanna Jean Navarro and Cindy Manalese are Grade 5 students and are looking forward to graduating from elementary school in 2008. Rowel Lazaro is in Grade 3 and also hopes to complete his elementary education. These four share this dream with thousands of other children who see education as their way out of poverty. And Petron is fueling their hope for a better life.

Beyond its obvious definition, Petron is taking HOPE to mean Helping Filipino children and Youth Overcome Poverty through Education. The company looks to being a catalyst for long-term and meaningful changes in society. And for corporate social responsibility to truly make a difference, it is focusing its interventions on where they will count the most: in basic education.

In 2002, Petron scaled up its social development efforts to enabling elementary-aged children to attend and complete primary school. The company believed that poverty was largely driven by a lack of education or rather, the inaccessibility of education to a large portion of society. If children from impoverished families were just given the opportunity to learn to read, to write, to think, to formulate ideas: and ultimately to dream—then there is hope for the future generation.

Tulong Aral is based on the simple idea of sending a few thousand children from impoverished families to school to receive and complete their primary education. Yet, its implications are deep and far-reaching for the beneficiaries and their families. At the very least, it gives them a wellspring of hope that they can rise above poverty through education. For Petron employees and program partners, Tulong Aral gives them an avenue to make a difference in the lives of others.

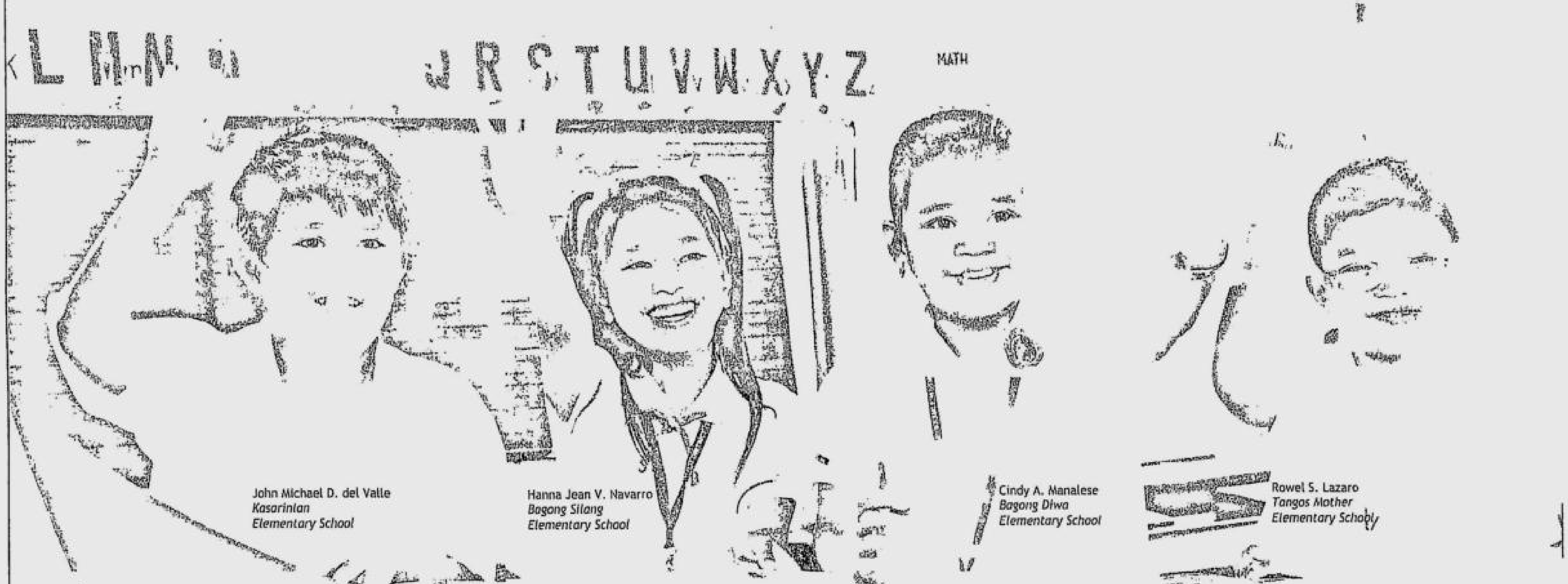
Since then, the program has put 1,000 children every year to 80 public elementary schools. Its first batch of students is now in Grade 5, one more step to completing primary schooling. More importantly, they are showing how, given a chance, they can in turn make their benefactors proud of giving them this gift of education. Of the 5,000 Tulong Aral ng Petron scholars, 413 have been recognized as outstanding students, while 55 received medals as first honor students. John Michael, Hanna Jean, Cindy and Rowel are among the consistent honor students since starting the program in Grade 1.

Equally important, Tulong Aral has encouraged partnerships with other organizations to broaden its impact and enhance program management. Mirant Philippines Foundation is sending 473 children in its partner communities in Iloilo, Aklan and Cebu to school using the Tulong Aral program as its model. Global financial institution Credit Suisse is sending 100 children through the program, and its employees regularly volunteer in activities such as school supplies distribution. Ronald McDonald Charities piloted its Bright Minds Read program to some of the schools taking part in Tulong Aral, helping enhance the teachers' abilities to make reading easy and fun for their students. A complementary program, Sa Aklat Sisikat, likewise fosters the love of reading to students through values-laden storybooks. The Foundation's long-time partnership with the DSWD and a unique tie-up with Petron Gasul have resulted in the Petron Gasul Pangkabuhayan Kart. This initiative is being looked at as a way to provide parents of Tulong Aral scholars with a means to earn additional income. And World Vision Development Foundation is helping Petron Foundation manage the increasing number of Tulong Aral scholars.

In support of the Department of Education's Adopt-A-School Program and in partnership with PBSP, Petron continues to put up school buildings in communities where the need is greatest. In 2006, one Petron School each was built in Datu Paglas, Sultan sa Barongis, Tawi Tawi, Nasipit, Iligan and Jimenez. This brings to 19 the total number of schools built since 2002. Some of these schools are funded from a grant by the USAID.

All these initiatives on education have not detracted Petron from assuming its other mandates on CSR. It continues to work towards sustainable development, specifically in the province of Bataan, where Petron is actively engaged in an integrated coastal management program. The company has also responded decisively to help in disasters in Southern Leyte, Guimaras and the Bicol region. And it has effectively engaged the employees from Petron offices and facilities nationwide to make CSR a part of what they do whether cleaning up the shores, planting trees, supporting relief operations, or donating storybooks. It is a practice that has become common for the people of Petron, who live the trait "Volunteerism in Action" in their desire to make a lasting contribution to society. A desire that [illegible] nd larg[illegible] finds its way to he[illegible] secur[illegible] better future for the [illegible]ilipino children. Children like [illegible] hr[illegible] ar[illegible] Jean, Cindy and Ro[illegible] wh[illegible] hope of overcoming pover[illegible] fueled by Petron today.

Grade Five Na Po Kami!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MATH

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Kasarinlan Elementary School

Hanna Jean V. Navarro
Bagong Silang Elementary School

Cindy A. Manalese
Bagong Diwa Elementary School

Rowel S. Lazaro
Tangos Mother Elementary School

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PBSP & USAID: Three Decades of Partnership

ONE OF THE FIRST DONORS THAT AFFIRMED PBSP's BELIEF IN building human capital as a foundation for nation-building was the foreign assistance agency of the United States Government, the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

On its 36th Foundation Day, PBSP looks back to three decades of partnership that have helped improve the lives of thousands of Filipinos.

Training development workers

It began during PBSP's founding years in the 1970s when USAID donated office equipment to the Foundation and funded an internship program to train future development workers.

Empowering farmers

When PBSP opened its doors to external funding, USAID was one of the first donors to provide financial assistance. The first development support came in 1984 with a grant to implement the Rural Agricultural Credit Financing Program. The Program benefited farmers' cooperatives and their members, at a time when only a handful of NGOs were helping them.

1986. Rebuilding the nation

As the Philippines transitioned to the new democratic era, PBSP implemented the Provincial Development Strategy (PDS) with a series of co-financing grants from USAID. From 1986 to 1991, PBSP targeted 9 percent of the poor in 15 priority provinces. PDS disbursed P109 million in financial assistance to help about 120,000 poor households through 505 projects implemented by local organizations.

The lessons from PDS helped frame PBSP's brand of resource-based integrated area development. Since 1991, the Area Resource Management (ARM) has been PBSP's flagship strategy for poverty reduction.

Fueling entrepreneurship

In 1989, USAID again left an enduring mark in PBSP's history with a $13-million grant to start its Small and Medium Enterprise Credit program (SMEC). To date, after 17 years, SMEC has provided P2.1 billion in loans to 7,245 SMEs, and in the process created 11,326 new jobs.

Disaster management and rehabilitation

A string of natural calamities hit the Philippines in the early '90s. With USAID assistance, PBSP helped rebuild lives devastated by the Baguio earthquake, the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, and other disasters.

People's participation in decentralized governance

The '90s also saw the "decentralization of power in favor of the local area." PBSP implemented three USAID projects to strengthen local governance: the Local Development Assistance Program (LDAP), Decentralized Shelter and Urban Development (DSUD), and the Governance and Local Democracy (GOLD) project, which strengthened democratic institutions and people's participation in local governance.

Institution-building for sustainable development

During this period, a series of grants was awarded to PBSP by USAID to implement formal and informal education projects in different parts of the country.

With a grant from USAID, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) managed a debt-swap resulting in a $22-million endowment fund to finance an environmental foundation. WWF engaged PBSP to help in organizing what would now be known as the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE).

Building human capital in the New Millennium

PBSP recently reviewed its 7th five-year plan to reflect how the Foundation would meet the challenges of the New Millennium.

The American people continue to support PBSP by working through other partnership arrangements. Together, PBSP and USAID are improving access to quality education and providing livelihood skills training, especially in Muslim Mindanao.

PBSP calibrated its health programs to contribute meaningfully to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals' health targets. To do this, PBSP mobilizes multi-sector collaboration for better governance, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, avian influenza preparedness, tuberculosis control, and health systems improvement.

Today, USAID is the single, largest supporter of PBSP's health programs.

PBSP takes on tuberculosis

TB LINC

LINKING INITIATIVES and NETWORKING to CONTROL TUBERCULOSIS

- Multi-sector collaboration a key approach

The Philippines carries the 9th largest burden of tuberculosis in the world. Approximately 390,038 Filipinos have TB, and 75 people die daily from this curable disease.

PBSP is pleased to support the Department of Health's (DOH) National Tuberculosis Control Program in a DOH-led, multi-stakeholder, multi-sector effort to reduce TB prevalence and mortality by half by 2010.

PBSP recently signed a cooperative agreement with the USAID to implement the Linking Initiatives and Networking to Control Tuberculosis (TB LINC) Project. This will be implemented with support from local governments and in collaboration with TB stakeholders, the World Health Organization and other USAID health projects. TB LINC targets to achieve 70 percent case detection rate and 85 percent treatment success rates in 21 provinces and cities, including the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. These targets directly contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

TB LINC Project objectives are to improve TB policy and financing, improve systems capacity for quality implementation of the Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course (DOTS) strategy, improve utilization of DOTS facilities and services, and improve behavior and attitude for TB control and treatment.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie A. Kenney will deliver the keynote address at the 36th Annual Membership Meeting and Foundation Day Celebration of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) on Jan. 23 at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati. Ambassador Kenney's address will highlight the many contributions of PBSP to corporate social responsibility in the Philippines and the long-standing partnership between PBSP and the American people

Recipients now partners in building communities

By Marlet D. Salazar

THE URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING A FACELIFT in recent years. Local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector are getting more and more involved in helping eradicate poverty and homelessness in the country. In helping build new communities, they also help build the character and confidence of the people.

One of the programs that have bred community leaders while building a community is the Philippine Business for Social Progress' STEP-UP (Strategic Private Sector Partnerships for Urban Poverty Reduction). From these communities rose a group of beneficiaries who are now giving back and assisting PBSP with their projects.

STEP-UP is an integrated development program for the urban poor. Aside from projects that focus on housing, community infrastructure and facilities improvement, the program also highlights capability building and organizational development for the community leaders and homeowners' associations (HOA). The Nagkakaisang Bigkis Lakas ng Pasacola Dulo (Nabigla Po) HOA in Barangay Nagkaisang Nayon is one of the communities assisted by the program. They have been an active partner of PBSP for the last three years. A manpower cooperative was formed to realize their goal to provide jobs for members of the association. The Nabigla PO Construction and Manpower Development Cooperative (Nacmadeco) is one of the end results of this partnership.

Nacmadeco is now a partner of STEP-UP in the latter's construction projects. Many of the workers are actual members of the co-op formed by the PBSP-assisted HOA.

The skills development provided by PBSP was implemented with the help of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) and the National Union of Building and Construction Workers (NUBCW). The community members were trained on carpentry, construction, electrical, masonry, and plumbing to name just a few.

The STEP-UP program is implemented by PBSP through the support of the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction managed by the Asian Development Bank and implemented by PBSP in partnership with the Department of Finance and [illegible]

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Philippine Business for Social Progress

as of September 30, 2006

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AVAILABLE AT LEADING SUPERMARKETS NATIONWIDE

Beating the competition by a nose

By Alex Y. Vergara

THE PHILIPPINES may be lagging behind Thailand and Singapore in medical tourism, but it may have an ace that can make it edge its neighbors by a nose.

The Belo Medical Group is targeting the huge Filipino community abroad who may be in need of nose jobs (rhinoplasty), as it joins the government's campaign to encourage people outside the country to avail of the Philippines' various medical services.

Rhinoplasty is the most popular cosmetic procedure among Filipinos, especially now that the procedure has become more affordable. Technological advances have also made "new" noses look natural in Asian faces.

In fact, the Belo Medical Group has already seen, in the last few months, an increase in *balikbayan* and foreign clients.

Encouraging

"We have yet to see a significant influx," says cosmetic surgeon Dr. Ed Yap, an ear, nose and throat specialist, who performs many of the required procedures, "but the gradual increase has been very encouraging."

Belo has been able to market its "ambulatory service centers" in Makati, Greenhills, Quezon City and Alabang.

Accredited by the Department of Health, the ambulatory service centers, which are almost like full-service operating rooms, are now at par with big hospitals in terms of facilities for cosmetic surgery, says Yap.

Apart from state-of-the-art facilities, Belo also offers people in need of a nose job several advantages not found in bigger, supposedly more modern hospitals and clinics abroad, according to Yap.

Cheaper

One advantage is cost. Yap says, while the procedure can cost $2,500-$4,000 in the United States, he charges P60,000-P100,000 ($1,225-$2,050 at current exchange rates).

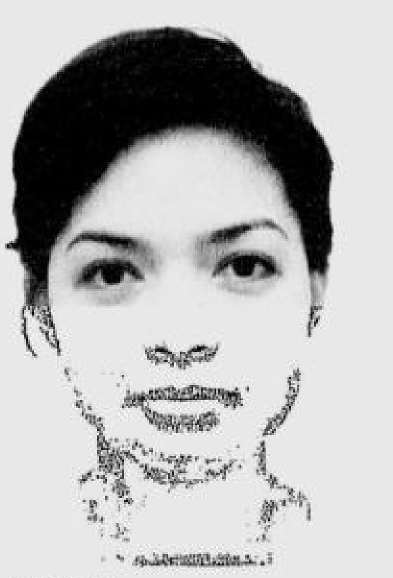
"It really depends on how difficult the job is, but I normally do a series of procedures to improve the person's nose," he explains.

Yap has also had a lot of experience doing "Asian-Malay noses." He has done close to 4,000 noses since he went into cosmetic surgery in 1998.

He has also performed nose jobs for Caucasians and Arabs who wanted their sharp, aquiline noses "softened" and reduced.

Yap says one reason why overseas Filipinos should consider having their noses done here is that doctors abroad may not be aware of the difference in Asian and Caucasian skin.

He says Caucasians have thinner skin so are not as prone to scarring as Orientals are.



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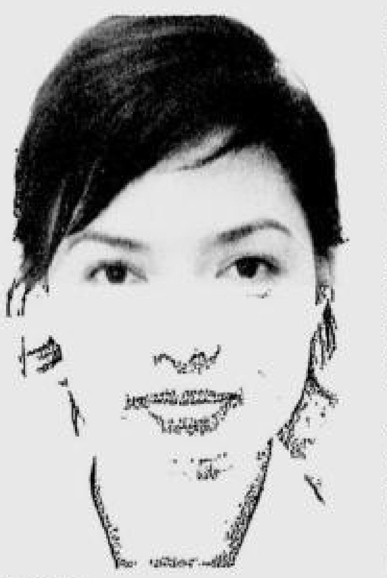


AFTER

"Doctors abroad can put sutures almost anywhere on a Caucasian's face," says Yap. "They (sutures) normally disappear in time, but not in Asians."

Yap adds that other doctors may also not be as thorough and as concerned as he is when dealing with the unique requirements of the Filipino nose.

"It would be so much easier to simply give in to whatever the patient wants," he says. "But I've always made it a point to first analyze his/her facial structure before doing the necessary sub-procedures to come up with (what would be closest) to an ideal nose."

Preparatory work may include cartilage trimming and repositioning, conchal (ear cartilage) grafts, septoplasty (repair of the nasal septum) and osteotomy (breaking the nasal bones).

"Some surgeons make do with silicon insertion and alarplasty," says Yap. "The absence or lack of structural work gives the nose an unnatural or surgical look."

Better than silicon

Apart from a weak bridge, the typical Filipino nose is a tad broad, hence the need for preliminaries. After trimming, Yap inserts an implant called Goretex which, he says, is better than silicon implant.

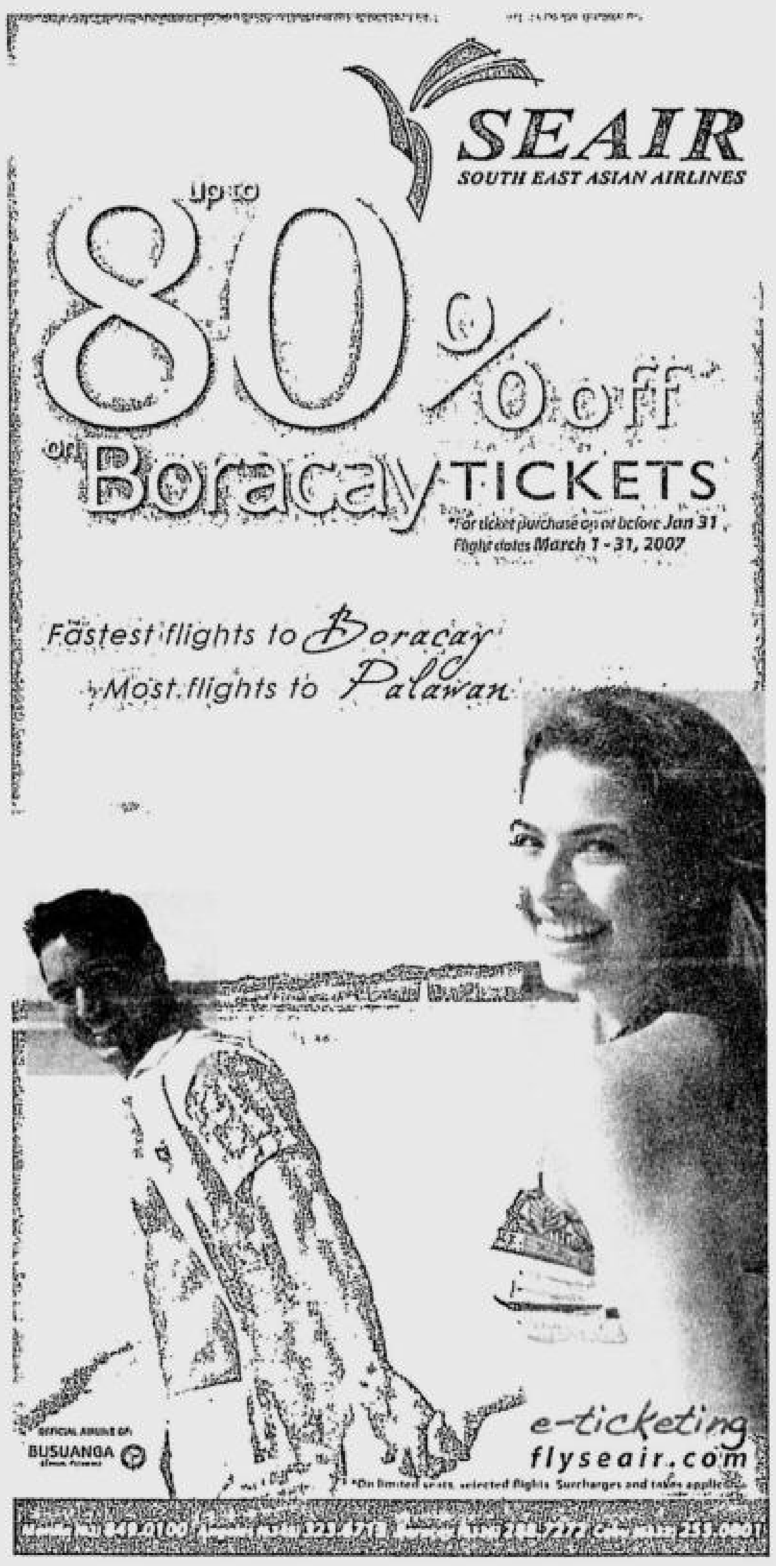
It has a protective covering to insulate it from the rest of the body. Silicon implant, unlike Goretex, has no small holes that allow it to meld with the body's tissues. A Goretex implant eventually becomes part of the body.

Belo is only one of three establishments in the Philippines that use Goretex in its rhinoplasty procedures.

"Goretex manages to look natural even after several decades," says Yap. "And since it is almost rejection-free, it's perfect for the *balikbayan*, who only has a few weeks to spare before he/she leaves Manila. A typical operation takes about 90 minutes."

It usually takes a week for the swelling around the nose area to subside, says Yap. By the third week, the patient can already start showing off his/her new and improved look.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



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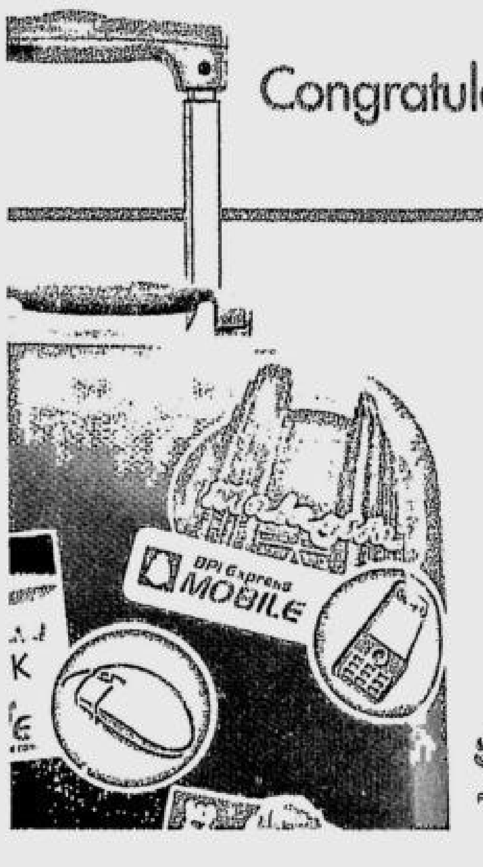
- leaves skin bursting with vitality

CALL 813-7959

facial care CENTRE FOR MEN
MAKATI · ORTIGAS · TOMAS MORATO · BINONDO · ALABANG · SHAW · CONGRESSIONAL · PAMPANGA · CEBU



Congratulations to the second quarterly draw winners!

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BPI Express MOBILE
Omar L. Tobias
Olympia, Makati
Vacation package at the exotic Club Paradise Resort in Palawan

BPI Express PHONE 89-100
Maricar De Castro
Vito Cruz, Manila
Exhilarating vacation package at Bohol Beach Club

BPI Express TELLER ATM
Ma. Madonna Dorotan
Chino Roces, Makati
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BPI Express ONLINE
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Marcelo Casillan III
Taytay, Rizal
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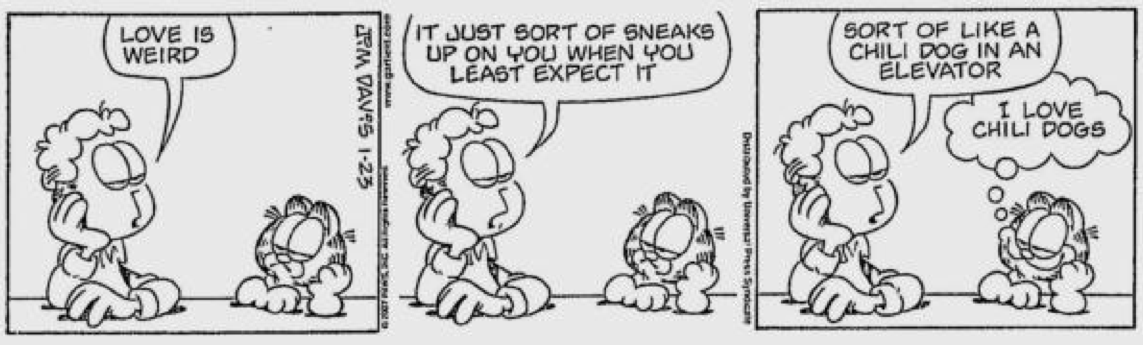
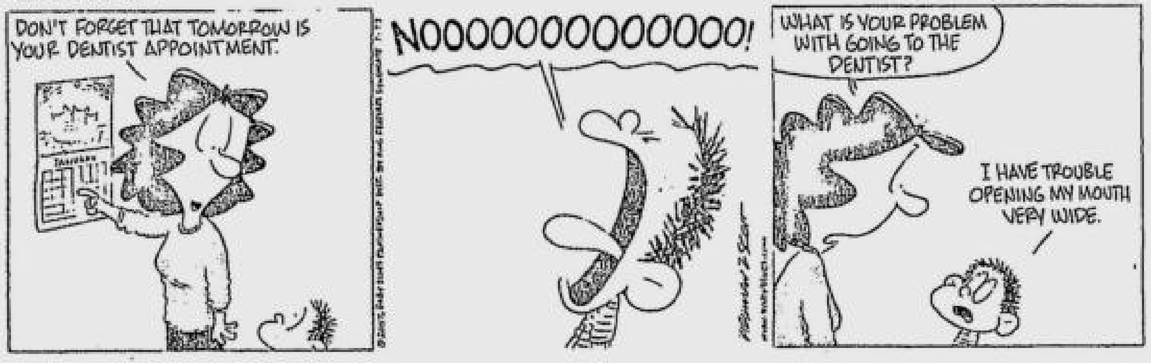
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


LOVE IS WEIRD
JIM DAVIS 1-23
IT JUST SORT OF SNEAKS UP ON YOU WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT
SORT OF LIKE A CHILI DOG IN AN ELEVATOR
I LOVE CHILI DOGS

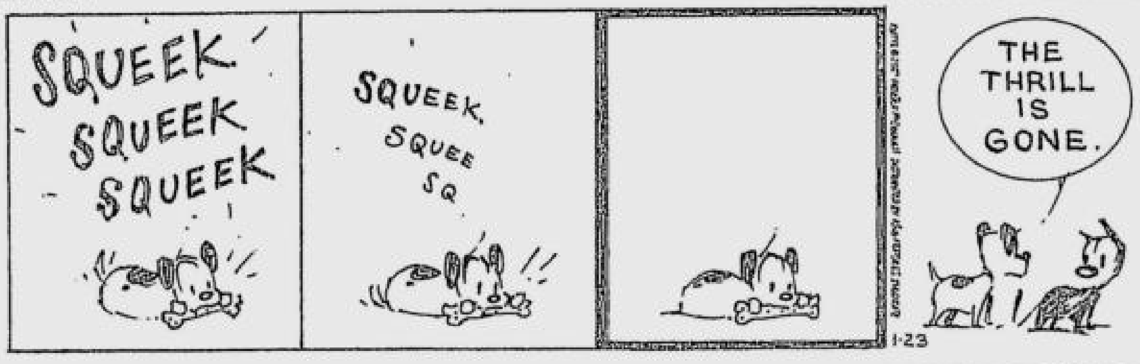
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DON'T FORGET THAT TOMORROW IS YOUR DENTIST APPOINTMENT.
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!
WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM WITH GOING TO THE DENTIST?
I HAVE TROUBLE OPENING MY MOUTH VERY WIDE.

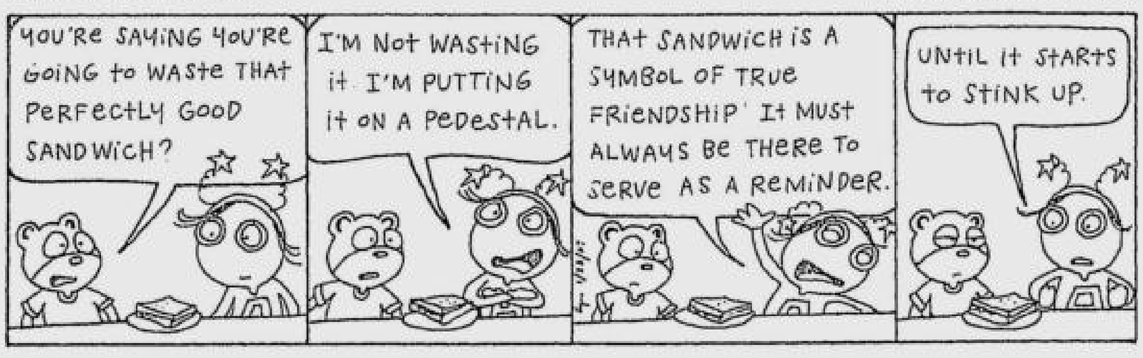
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SQUEEK SQUEEK SQUEEK
SQUEEK. SQUEE SQ
THE THRILL IS GONE.
1-23

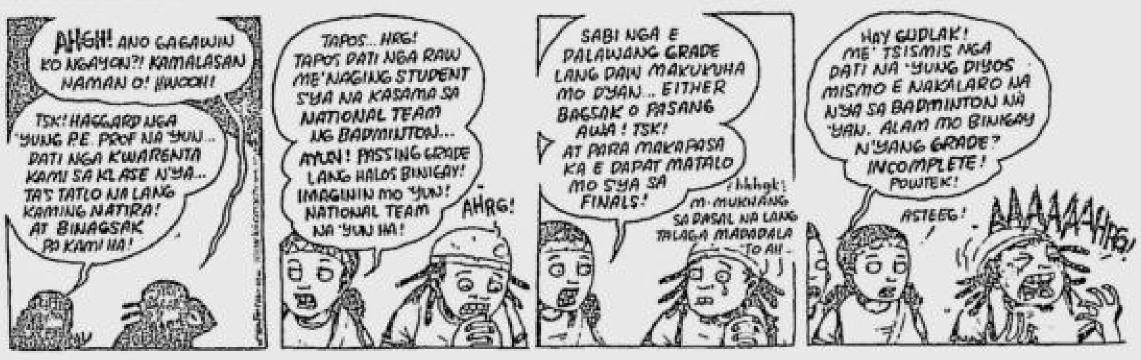
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YOU'RE SAYING YOU'RE GOING TO WASTE THAT PERFECTLY GOOD SANDWICH?
I'M NOT WASTING IT. I'M PUTTING IT ON A PEDESTAL.
THAT SANDWICH IS A SYMBOL OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP. IT MUST ALWAYS BE THERE TO SERVE AS A REMINDER.
UNTIL IT STARTS TO STINK UP.

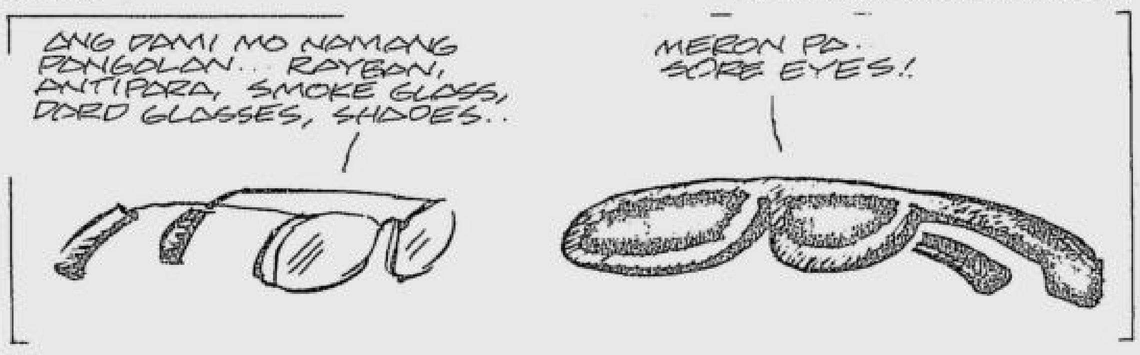
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AHGH! ANO GAGAWIN KO NGAYON?! KAMALASAN NAMAN O! IIINOOH!
TSK! HAGGARD NGA 'YUNG P.E. PROF NA 'YUN... DATI NGA KWARENTA KAMI SA KLASE N'YA... TA'S TATLO NA LANG KAMING NATIRA! AT BINAGSAK PA KAMI HA!
TAPOS... HRG! TAPOS DATI NGA RAW ME'NAGING STUDENT S'YA NA KASAMA SA NATIONAL TEAM NG BADMINTON... AYUN! PASSING GRADE LANG HALOS BINIGAY! IMAGININ MO 'YUN! NATIONAL TEAM NA 'YUN HA!
AHRG!
SABI NGA E DALAWANG GRADE LANG DAW MAKUKUHA MO D'YAN... EITHER BAGSAK O PASANG AWA! TSK! AT PARA MAKAPASA KA E DAPAT MATALO MO S'YA SA FINALS!
!hhhgk! M-MUKHANG SA DASAL NA LANG TALAGA MADADALA TO AH...
HAY GUDLAK! ME' TSISMIS NGA DATI NA 'YUNG DIYOS MISMO E NAKALARO NA N'YA SA BADMINTON NA 'YAN. ALAM MO BINIGAY N'YANG GRADE? INCOMPLETE! POWTEK!
ASTEEG!
AAAAAAAHRG!

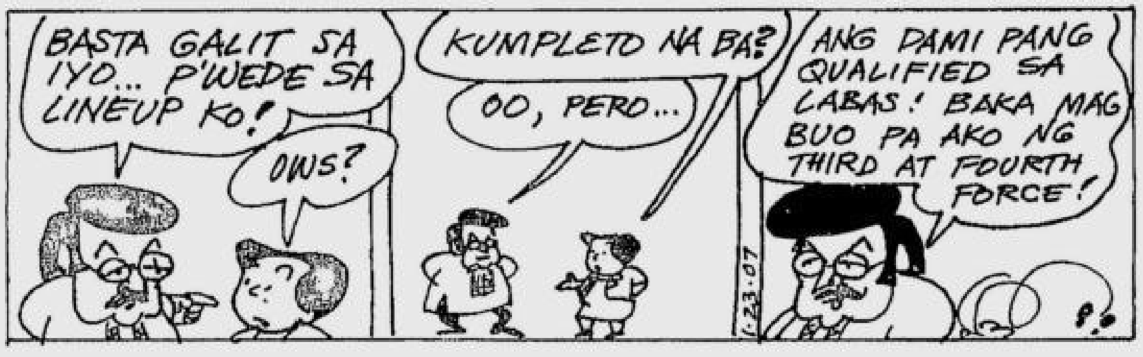
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG DAMI MO NAMANG PANGALAN... RAYBAN, ANTIPARA, SMOKE GLASS, DARO GLASSES, SHADES..
MERON PA. SORE EYES!

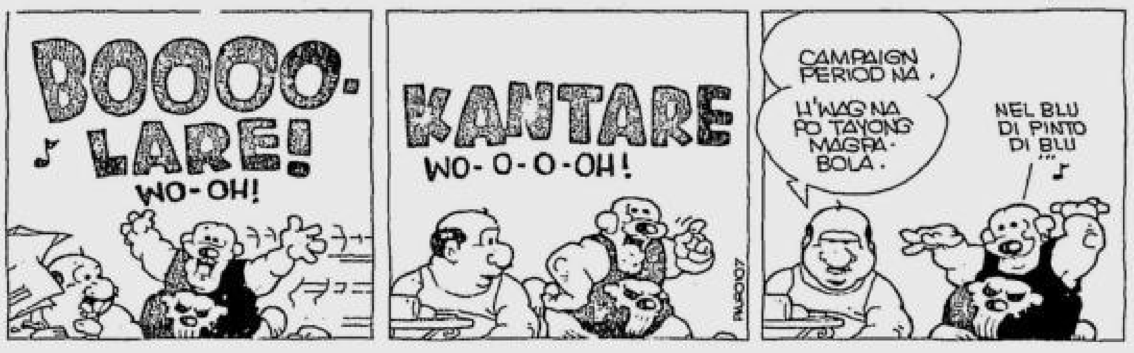
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BASTA GALIT SA IYO... P'WEDE SA LINEUP KO!
OWS?
KUMPLETO NA BA?
OO, PERO...
1-23-07
ANG DAMI PANG QUALIFIED SA LABAS! BAKA MAG BUO PA AKO NG THIRD AT FOURTH FORCE!

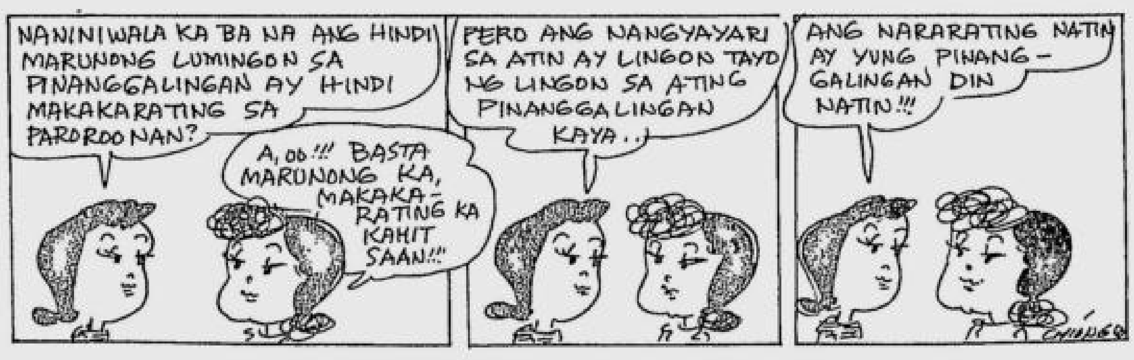
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BOOOO-LARE! WO-OH!
KANTARE WO-O-O-OH!
CAMPAIGN PERIOD NA.
H'WAG NA PO TAYONG MAGPA-BOLA.
NEL BLU DI PINTO DI BLU

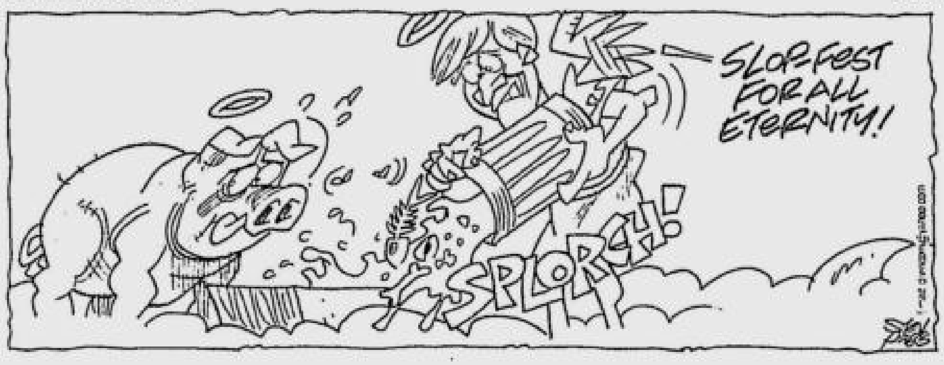
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NANINIWALA KA BA NA ANG HINDI MARUNONG LUMINGON SA PINANGGALINGAN AY HINDI MAKAKARATING SA PAROROONAN?
A, OO!!! BASTA MARUNONG KA, MAKAKA-RATING KA KAHIT SAAN!!
PERO ANG NANGYAYARI SA ATIN AY LINGON TAYO NG LINGON SA ATING PINANGGALINGAN KAYA..
ANG NARARATING NATIN AY YUNG PINANG-GALINGAN DIN NATIN!!!

DIVINE COMEDY

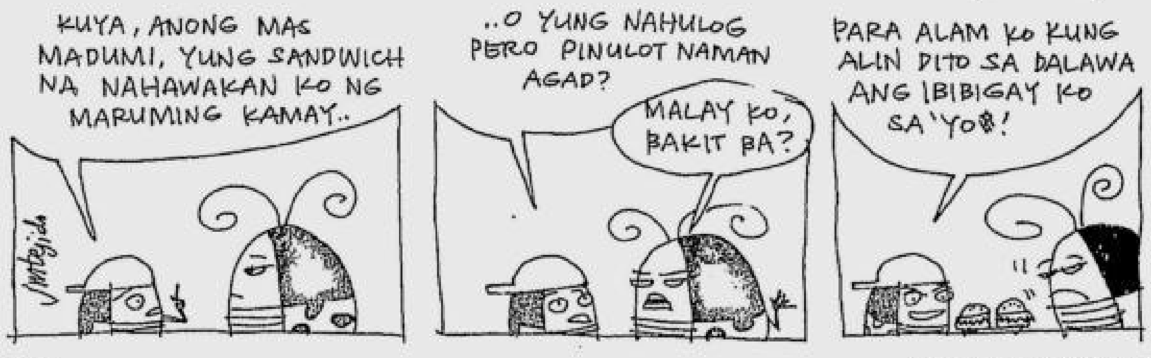
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SLOP-FEST FOR ALL ETERNITY!
SPLORSH!

ONE DAY IN PIG HEAVEN

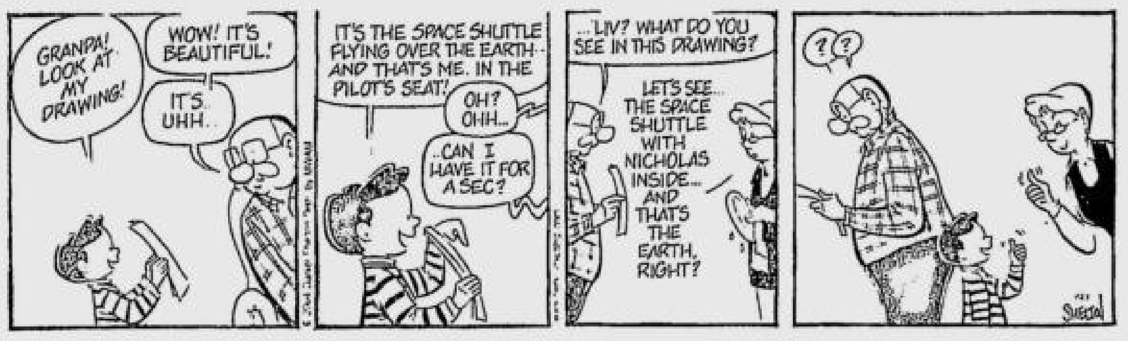
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

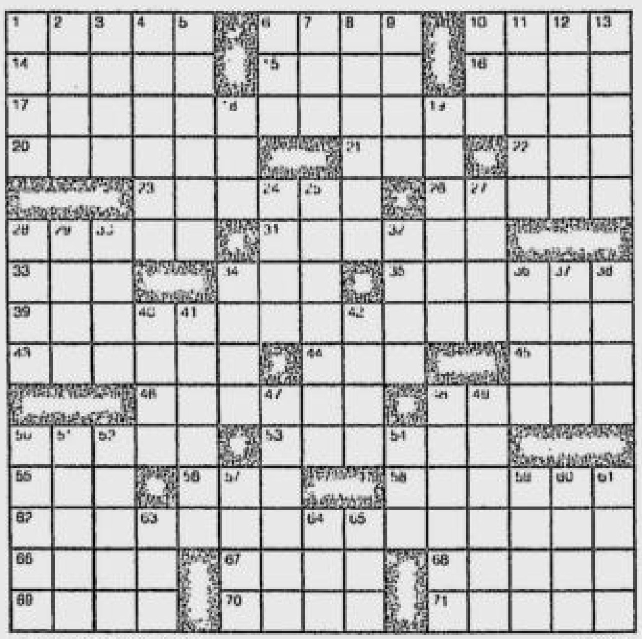

KUYA, ANONG MAS MADUMI, YUNG SANDWICH NA NAHAWAKAN KO NG MARUMING KAMAY..
..O YUNG NAHULOG PERO PINULOT NAMAN AGAD?
MALAY KO, BAKIT BA?
PARA ALAM KO KUNG ALIN DITO SA DALAWA ANG IBIBIGAY KO SA'YO!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GRANPA! LOOK AT MY DRAWING!
WOW! IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
IT'S UHH..
IT'S THE SPACE SHUTTLE FLYING OVER THE EARTH.. AND THAT'S ME. IN THE PILOT'S SEAT!
OH? OHH...
..CAN I HAVE IT FOR A SEC?
...LIV? WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THIS DRAWING?
LET'S SEE... THE SPACE SHUTTLE WITH NICHOLAS INSIDE... AND THAT'S THE EARTH, RIGHT?
??

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Gordon Seaberg
Los Angeles, CA

1/23/07

ACROSS
1 Texas landmark
6 Stoic Roman philosopher
10 Put down
14 Of birth
15 Security for freedom
16 Ultimatum word
17 Subterfuge used in film demo?
20 Show one's face
21 Sock's end
22 Regret
23 Perfect place
26 Fall bloom
28 Activate a credit card
31 Curtain call
33 U.K. ref. book
34 Place to retire to
35 Easily excused
39 Hippie flexing his muscles?
43 One of a pair of genes
44 Shell propeller
45 Director Lee
46 Toward the tail-end
48 __ Claus
50 To pieces
53 Good to have around
55 Polite address
56 Word we share?
58 Cheerful
62 Claustrophobic excitement?
66 Author w/o a name?
67 Dust Bowl migrant
68 __ nous (just between us)
69 Swine meat
70 Catamaran canvas
71 Seine port

DOWN
1 Latin handle
2 Light source
3 Situated above
4 Reconcile
5 Soap ingredient
6 TV network north of the U.S.
7 Swiss river
8 Piece of man's jewelry
9 Faux butter
10 Tennis call
11 Bright-eyed
12 Magazine copy
13 Ward off
18 Sell-out letters
19 Closer
24 Chirp
25 Not alfresco
27 Dispatched
28 Davenport
29 Hale and hearty
30 Fan favorite
32 Higher than
34 Writer Easton Ellis
36 Present Persia
37 Isn't incorrect?
38 Org. of Wie
40 Loss by friction
41 Catcher Howard
42 Grow less
47 I've got it!
48 Evening repast
49 Moby Dick, maybe?
50 BMI competitor
51 Spinet, e.g.
52 Tree-shaded area
54 Hairy coat
57 Space saucers
59 Two of Caesar's final words
60 Land measure
61 __ and there
63 Squid's squirt
64 LXX divided by X
65 Sushi delicacy

Monday's Puzzle Solved

L	O	R	D	S	■	D	O	M	■	T	R	E	E	S
I	N	U	I	T	■	E	D	S	■	H	E	N	R	I
S	U	N	S	E	T	B	O	U	L	E	V	A	R	D
T	S	E	L	I	O	T	■	■	A	N	I	M	A	L
■	■	■	I	N	G	■	A	B	R	■	V	O	T	E
Y	U	C	K	■	A	D	D	E	D	■	F	R	A	S
A	N	D	E	S	■	A	Z	T	E	C	■	■	■	■
M	I	S	S	I	N	G	■	T	R	A	F	F	I	C
■	■	■	■	B	O	G	E	Y	■	W	A	N	D	A
I	S	I	S	■	L	E	A	S	T	■	U	N	I	T
T	I	N	E	■	E	R	R	■	H	A	S	■	■	■
A	L	A	R	M	S	■	■	P	O	N	T	I	F	F
L	I	F	E	I	S	B	E	A	U	T	I	F	U	L
I	C	O	N	S	■	A	L	A	■	I	N	F	R	A
C	A	G	E	S	■	M	I	R	■	C	O	Y	L	Y

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1/23/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: There's something about you that is distinctive and somehow very exclusive to your character. You have your own style. Because of this, you make a lasting impression on others. Many of you have specific technical skills. You have high ideals, and you invariably choose the honorable path. Expect a fun-loving social year ahead that especially promotes partnerships of all kinds.

Birthdate of: Mariska Hargitay, actress; Brendan Shanahan, hockey player; Humphrey Bogart, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Take advantage of unexpected opportunities to travel, take a course or get further education in some way. You have a chance to expand your experience of the world now

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Unexpected inheritances, favors, gifts and goodies come your way now. Don't question anything. Don't worry about attached strings. Just say thank you

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Partnerships can expand your world in a wonderful way now. Others might have seen this coming; nevertheless, you seem to be the last to know! Go figure.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Surprise job opportunities can land in your lap now. Act quickly, because this window of opportunity will be brief. You deserve this.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Romance, love affairs, unexpected vacations, new turns and twists with sports and pleasant times with children are just some of the things that catch you off-guard in a lovely way now. Enjoy your good fortune.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Many of you have a lovely chance to expand your home or your family, or both. Something is definitely enriching your personal life. This is excellent.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Good news perhaps related to relatives and siblings, comes your way now. Whatever occurs will lift your spirits and make you happier

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be on the lookout for unexpected ways to boost your earnings. They are definitely there waiting in the wings. However, you're going to have to act quickly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Good fortune is smiling on you now. Surprise favors and goodies can come to you out of the blue. Some of these will be in the form of an opportunity that you must quickly grab

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): A minor epiphany might occur to you now. Something happens that really opens your eyes and makes you appreciate who you are and what you have

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Friends and groups seek you out now. Someone wants to be your friend. Clubs and groups want to call you one of their own. Consider this a compliment

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Surprise career opportunities can definitely come your way now. Be receptive to this. And be ready to act. This window of opportunity is very brief—but it's there!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	8						2	
6		4				5		7
	5		8		9		6	
		7		8		6		
			1		6			
		6		7		1		
	7		6		5		1	
1		3				4		8
	2						3	

Difficulty Level ★★

1/23

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	2	4	9	6	3	1	7	5
6	1	9	8	5	7	3	4	2
5	7	3	2	4	1	8	6	9
1	8	5	3	7	9	4	2	6
7	9	6	4	8	2	5	3	1
4	3	2	5	1	6	9	8	7
2	5	8	6	9	4	7	1	3
9	6	7	1	3	8	2	5	4
3	4	1	7	2	5	6	9	8

Difficulty Level ★

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Understand your body & slow the aging process

CUT AN APPLE IN HALF AND WATCH as oxygen makes it "age." This can happen to our bodies.

There are many theories about aging and all provide some lessons. To tap the waters of the fountain of youth, we have to first understand our body.

DNA/genetics. The blueprint of an individual's life is programmed in the DNA. Everyone is given a unique code that reveals one's tendencies. DNA can be damaged/influenced by lifestyle, diet, pollution, toxic buildup.

Neuro endocrine. A biochemical network that releases hormones regulated by the hypothalamus in the brain. It can be damaged by cortisol, a stress hormone produced by the adrenal glands in the kidneys. The result: hormonal imbalance.

Free radical. The result of an unbalanced molecule that reacts with healthy molecules in a destructive way. Free radical accelerators are lifestyle, drugs, poor diet, radiation.

Membrane. Changes in the way cells transfer chemicals, heat, electrical processes, thus affecting their ability to function well. The result: disease, rapid aging.

Hayflick limit. The idea that the human cell is limited in the number of times it can divide. The result: eventual death. However, nutrition has a positive effect on cells. Overfed cells divide/regenerate faster than underfed cells.

Mitochondrial. The power plant of the cell that produces ATP (adenosine triphosphate, a compound), fuel that the body uses. In order to keep ATP levels high, the body must be healthy.

Cross-linking. In their book, "Life Extension," Dr. Duke Pearson and Sandy Shaw pointed out the use of nutrition hormones, mega vitamins and some drugs could help and maintain better health in old age.

Glycosylation theory is the binding of glucose and protein that can best be observed by cutting the proverbial apple. Through glycosylation, the binding of simple sugar (glucose) to protein through the help of oxygen, the body will be vulnerable to diseases like diabetes.

Optimum health—the answer

Research has suggestions on how to prolong life and to enhance health. Since we cannot do anything about genetics—we cannot choose our parents—let us focus on:

Lifestyle

- Reduce stress by avoiding persons/situations that can irritate you. Enroll in body and mind programs that can relax you.
- Practice clean living by avoiding tobacco, excessive drinking of alcohol, eating junk food, drinking clean, purified water, exercising regularly. Avoid drugs/narcotics. Avoid pollution.
- Avoid toxins and exposure to pesticides, aluminum fluoride.
- Take adequate amounts of multivitamins/minerals daily. Your body's needs increase with age.
- Maintain hormonal balance through natural means. See your doctor and ask him/her about natural alternatives like herbal medicine, vitamin, therapy. One promising product is Lumiglow, a combination of cream of soya, wild yam, aloe that improves hormonal balance. Call AIGS Marketing, 6873016, 6873018.
- Consider regenerative medicine if you have a health condition. There are hospitals offering you a wide range of choices like autologous stem cell transplant by Stemtech Ltd., in partnership with Dr. Florencio Lucero, whose treatment is giving older people a better quality of life. Cardinal Santos Hospital, tel. 7261111, 7270001.

Looking younger

There is a noninvasive way of improving skin through a rejuvenating process called Mesoporation. Also known as virtual .syringe, it allows the penetration of hyaluronic acid, coenzyme Q10, amino acids, proteins and vitamins into the skin without the use of a needle or scalpel.

A pen instrument is gently rubbed on your skin using electroporation that stimulates the skin to become permeable enough to absorb the nutrients. Ask for the Asthyderm treatment.

Visible results like skin tightening and lifting are seen after one or two sessions. Call Dr. John Cenica, tel. 3733333 local 700.

Feel younger

You are only as young as you feel. Start your day with no emotional baggage. Release your anger, hurts, fears by embracing the new day with a smile. As they say, "Let go, and let God."

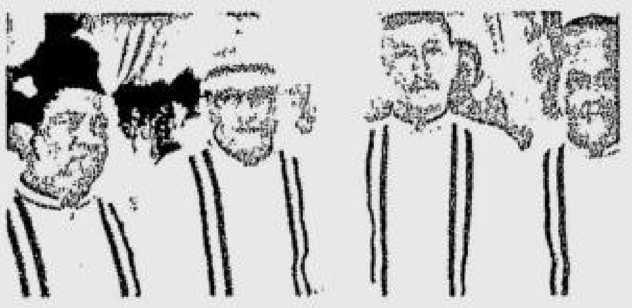
Love and light!

Reference: "Stop The Clock with the Clero Clinic Plan," Dr. Pierre Clero, tel. 8974122/23

THE ELEGANT, eye-catching Bai Sandra Sinsuat Sema, who is currently a Unesco Commissioner and first lady of Cotabato City, makes her royal grand entrance.

THE ELDER Rajah sa Buayan

SULTAN Tony Disomimba of Lanao del Sur



THE ROYAL Council of the Grand Sultanate of Buayan

A historic royal event

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

IN EXOTIC MINdanao, the 19-member Royal Council of the Grand Sultanate of Buayan proclaimed Datu **Muslimin G. Sema** as Datu sa Buayan, and Datu **Pax S. Mangudadatu** as the new Rajah Buayan during ceremonies at the new provincial capitol in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat.

The new Datu sa Buayan is the popular mayor of Cotabato City and secretary general of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), no less, *palanggas*. The new Rajah sa Buayan is the governor of Sultan Kudarat Province.

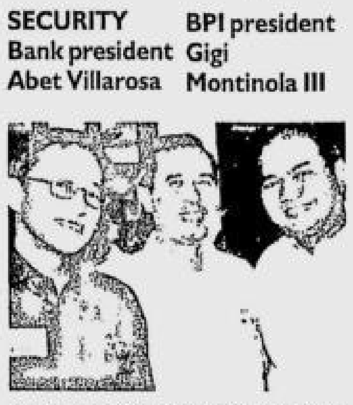
It definitely was a day of glitz and royal glamour, one of the most fabulous and historical events on the island. Muslim Mindanao's A-listers attended the event headed by **Bai Sandra S. Sema**, who was gorgeous in her chic Muslim outfit.

YOUNG ROYALS: Bai Putri Nursallam and Bai Hadiyah Malikah Sema

AIG Philam Saving Bank's Joven Reyes and Bankard VP Oscar Biason

SECURITY Bank president Abet Villarosa

BPI president Gigi Montinola III



EAST West Bank's Alex Ilagan, Metrobank's Ric Verde and Security Bank Cards' Pepo Nunez

Also present were mayors, councilors, members of the Lanao del Sur sultanate headed by Datu **Tony Disomimba**; PR man Datu **Ayo G. Gunting**; Bai **Soraya Sinsuat**, and other members of royalty of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao.

Bai Soraya told me the interesting background of Datu Sema. The new Datu Sa Buayan traces his lineage to Sultan Bayao, father of **Bai Popoyo** who married **Watamama Silongan**. The couple had a son, Datu **Kalantungan**, who married **Bai Unda**, sister of Datu Sinsuat and daughter of **Balabaran** and **Bai Pinadtaya**. Their son Datu Sema married Bai Samaya. Datu Muslimin Sema is their son.

Datu Sema married Bai Sandra Sinsuat Ampatuan and they have four sons and two daughters: Datu **Mohammad Abujihad**, Datu **Mohammad Abduljabbar**, Datu Mohammad **Ali Jawawi**, Datu Mohammad **Syed Azzorrouk**, Bai **Putri Nursallam** and Bai **Hadiyah Malikah**, *palanggas*.

They say, *palanggas*, that behind every successful man is a woman. In Datu Sema's successes, Bai Sandra, Unesco commissioner, the highest position awarded to a Muslim woman, has been his partner and inspiration.

Wearing your conscience

It was a fun pictorial as we posed for the Bench book encouraging us to "wear our conscience."

Moi wore a completely white outfit while my close partner in almost everything, **Pepper Teehankee**, was in all black. Many invitees teased us, saying "the good and the evil are side by side."

Après three months, the must-have book was launched at the Ayala Museum, dahlings.

"Wear Your Conscience" contains fabulous pictures by acclaimed photographer **Jun de Leon**, no less. Each page features provoking, fun and "very real" images of the likes of Ayala heirs, the *guapo* Zobel brothers **Jaime Augusto** and **Fernando**; INQUIRER's **Paolo Prieto** and sister, brilliant **Sandy Prieto-Romualdez**; the fantastic **Gokongwei** sisters **Jay**, adorable **Robina**, **Marcia**, **Faith** and **Liza**; **Nenita Floirendo** with daughters **Lind**, **Maricris** and **Marissa**; beautiful women like **Carol Garcia**, **Menchu Soriano**, **Maricris Zobel**, **Rosanna Tuason Fores** and **Gina Roxas**; ultra-glam **Vicky Zubiri** in tattered jeans; Secretary **Alberto Romulo** with daughters **Berna** and **Mons**; artist **Ben Cabrera**; and First Daughter **Luli Arroyo**, among others, dahlings.

BAI Sandra Sema with husband, the new Datu sa Buayan, Datu Muslimin Sema, Cotabato City mayor; and Rajah sa Buayan, Gov. Pax Mangudadatu

ANNA Marie Cruz, Jen Lanuza, Niki Chua and Me-ann Generoso

MASTERCARD's Anton Corro, Poch Villa-Real and Judith Dayrit with Metrobank's Liz Knight and Anne Young (second and fourth from left)

The persuasive call of that gentleman with a golden heart and master of retail, **Ben Chan**, to do good work was answered by our town's glitzy A-listers like **Marissa Concepcion**, **Lizette Cojuangco**, **Sharmila Hiranand**, **Kenneth Cobonpue**, **Gina de Venecia**, **Monchet Olives**, **Jackie Antonio**, **Doody Tuason**, and many others.

Celebrities like **Richard** and **Lucy Gomez**, and one-of-a-kind **Diether Ocampo** also supported Bench and its cause, *palanggas*.

On behalf of the project's beneficiary, "Sa Aklat Sisikat," **Margarita L. Delgado** and **Lizzie Zobel** expressed their deepest gratitude to Bench and all those involved for helping "build a nation of readers."

The book is edited by ABS-CBN's editor at large and marketing director **Philip Cu-Unjieng** and Metro Society's editor **Raul Manzano**.

Check out the special "Wear Your Conscience" line in Bench stores. A portion of the sales and proceeds from the book will be given to Sa Aklat Sisikat. To facilitate the transfer of customized school tables for deserving principals and teachers, 2go, the Aboitiz Company, is providing transport and moving services.

Toast to success

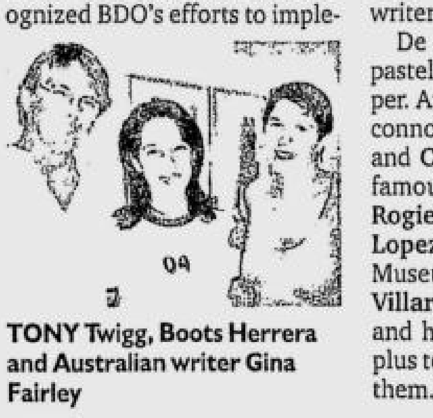
MasterCard Worldwide celebrated the New Year with a toast to partner banks for their contribution to the continued success of MasterCard in the Philippines.

Invitees represented the hottest banks like AIG PhilAm Savings Bank, Allied Bank, BPI, Banco de Oro, Citibank, HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank, *palanggas*.

Present were Allied Bank president **Rey Maclang**; BDO executive vice president and Credit Card Association of the Philippines chair **Rolando Tanchanco**; Metrobank Card Corp. president, super achiever **Anne Young**; HSBC senior vice president **Suresh Nanoo**; Equitable Card Network CFO **Ophie Camina**; and OneCard GM **Tom Guarin**.

MasterCard's brilliant team was led by vice president and senior country manager for the Philippines, *el simpatico* **Poch Villa-Real**; VP for marketing **Judith Dayrit**; cyber smart VP for operations **Anton Corro**; and member relations officer **Rochelle Leyba**.

The debonair Poch V. expressed MasterCard Philippines' appreciation to the banking industry for its loyalty and support. He cited their fantastic accomplishments in co-brand card programs and recognized BDO's efforts to implement the country's first publicly available MasterCard PayPass contact-less card program, *palanggas*.



TONY Twigg, Boots Herrera and Australian writer Gina Fairley

Bubbly comedienne **Giselle Sanchez** and DJ and TV sport host **Boyet Almazan** made the event so much livelier, dahlings.

Galleria Duemila

Galleria Duemila presented **Robert M. A. Robles**' exhibit "From the Old Pond I Ponder" at Gallery A and **RM de Leon**'s show "Between Structure and Gesture" at Gallery B. The gallery's **Silvana Diaz**, despite forecasts of rain, was so positive "guests will come." And they did, dahlings. They were greeted by scenes of "eternal serenity" in R. Robles' murals of an old pond.

Guests included **Phyllis Zaballero**; curator from Honolulu Hawaii, **Eva Laird-Smith**; famous international artist **Tony Twigg**; and curator and writer **Boots Herrera**.

De Leon's show featured pastel-colored acrylics on paper. Among the guests were art connoisseurs like **Ricky Toledo** and **Chito Vijandre** of the *tres* famous Firma designs; cousins **Rogie Panganiban** and **Cedie Lopez-Vargas** of the Lopez Museum; the artist's pals **Alvin Villaruel**, **Jonathan Olazo** and his girlfriend **Arlyn Onte**, plus tons of other art lovers like them.

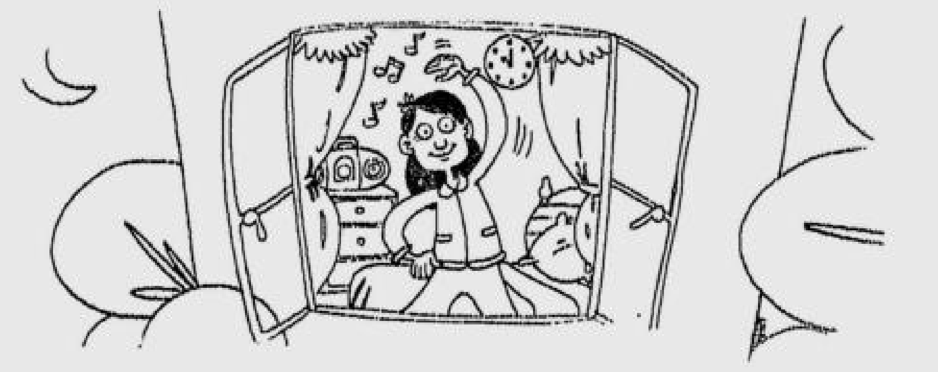
AT GALLERY A: Artists Phyllis Zaballero and Roberto Robles, Eva Laird-Smith of Honolulu, Galleria Duemila's Silvana Diaz and Dr. Leovino Garcia of Ateneo de Manila University

AT GALLERY B: Cousins Rogie Panganiban and Cedie Lopez Vargas, artist RM de Leon, Mitos Magsaysay and her kids

RICKY Amid, architect I.A. Gonzalez, Ferdinand Candelaria and Ellen Puyat

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

The bedroom workout



IF YOU THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING to be about you-know-what, I am sorry to disappoint you. Though, in a way it may be related to what you are thinking. Using your bedroom as a fitness center can get you in shape for more vigorous romps in the sack.

If you have a hectic schedule, your bedroom can be a convenient place for you to get fit. After all, where else can you work out in your pajamas? And if you are shy or a loner who don't enjoy exercising with other people, then bedroom workouts are for you.

You may get a treadmill, bike or elliptical trainer, if you have the space and the budget, to keep your heart healthy and lose some excess pounds. To avoid getting bored, watch television, listen to music or an e-book, or talk to a friend while you work out.

Be a star

Dancing is great exercise for the body and soul. Put on your favorite music and go for it. For half an hour, you can be the star of your own private dance show.

A more intense way of doing aerobic exercise in a small space is to do an imaginary skipping rope routine. Twirl your wrists as if you were holding a real rope and recall all your tricks from elementary school. Doing it to music is even more fun.

Out of shape? Then alternate 30 seconds of skipping with one or two minutes of marching in place. Lengthen the skipping interval as you get fitter.

An old-fashioned way of getting a high-energy aerobic workout without hurting your knees is with an exercise relic from the '80s—a "rebounder" or "mini-trampoline." It is also a space saver since you can store it under your bed.

Many sports stores still carry it in their inventory.

Not a good idea

Aerobic exercise is a good way to get your energy levels up in the morning. That's why it may not be a good idea to do it in the evening. Some people have so much energy after exercising that they cannot sleep.

More appropriate evening exercises are muscle-firming or stretching workouts since they do not raise your heart rate and adrenaline levels too much.

Gentle yoga, followed by some meditation, is a perfect bedtime workout.

Exercise videos open up a whole world of fitness routines you can do in your bedroom. You can belly dance one day, hip-hop the next, pump iron, do tai chi or yoga the third day.

You might think of using your bed as an exercise mat but most mattresses are not firm enough to support your body properly. I suggest you use a folded quilt or a couple of towels as substitute for an exercise mat if you do not have one.

One reason it is so convenient to exercise in your bedroom is that you do not have to wear special workout clothes. Wear whatever you want as long as it does not restrict your movement. But if you are going to do jumps, hops or skips of any kind, you need to wear athletic shoes and socks. If you are a woman, wear a bra to support your breasts.

A wooden floor (not just parquet over cement) is the best floor for jumping or jogging in place. Don't do rapid lateral moves on carpet because you can twist your ankle.

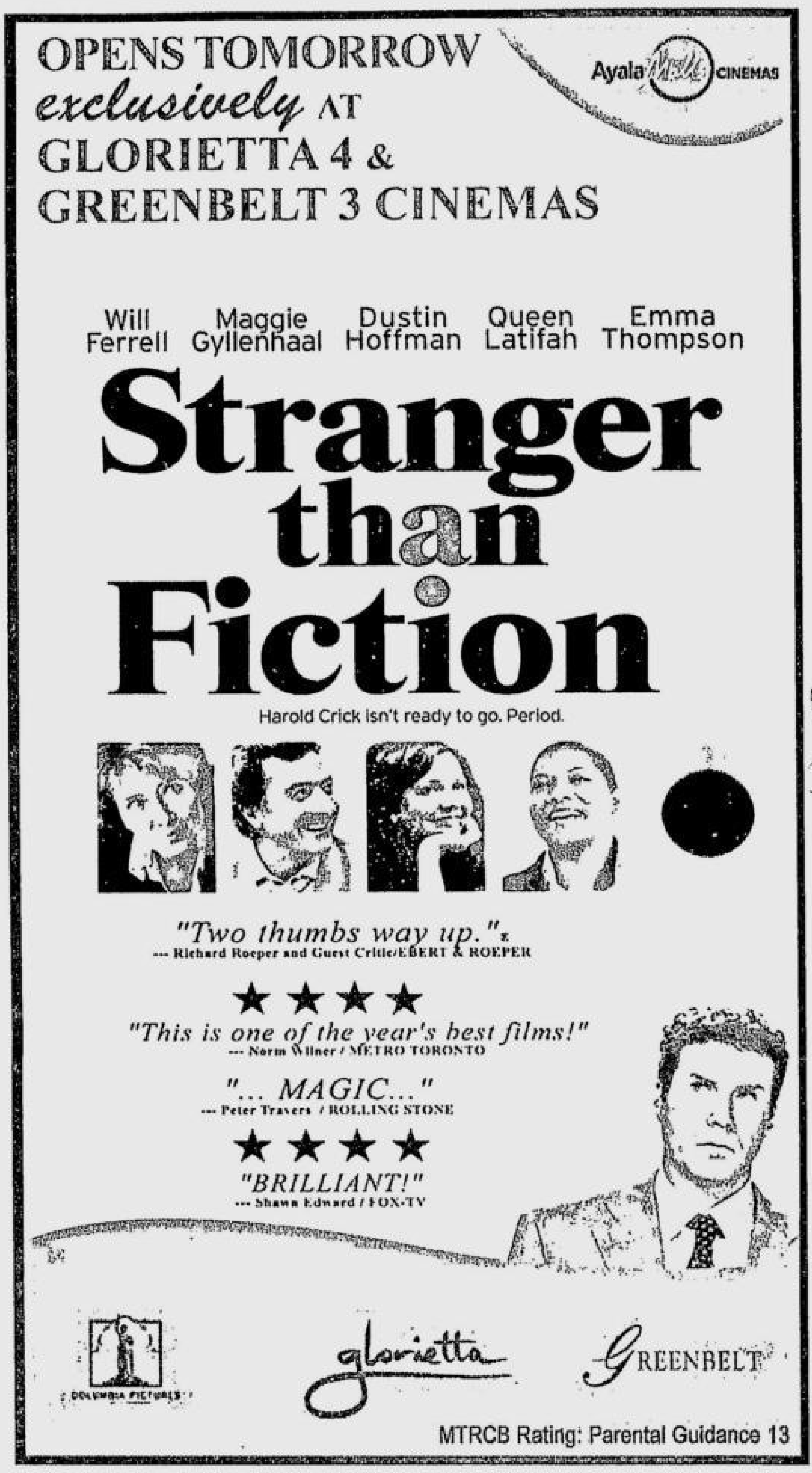
To keep yourself motivated, try marking a desk or wall calendar with a big red "X" for every day you exercise. This simple tip works quite well for some people. Have a definite goal (three times a week, for example) and a definite reward for accomplishing it (a new blouse or dress is a good one).

If you are the type who gets motivated by negative reinforcement, keep an unflattering picture of yourself nearby.

If the carrot appeals to you more than the stick, then use a picture of a slimmer you from years past, a picture of a celebrity role model (be realistic—no pictures of Angelina Jolie unless you once had a body like hers), or that old pair of jeans you want to wear again.

Note: The Scientific Sports & Fitness Council will hold a Level One Fitness Training Certification Course Jan. 27-Feb. 10. Call 0918-7574716.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info



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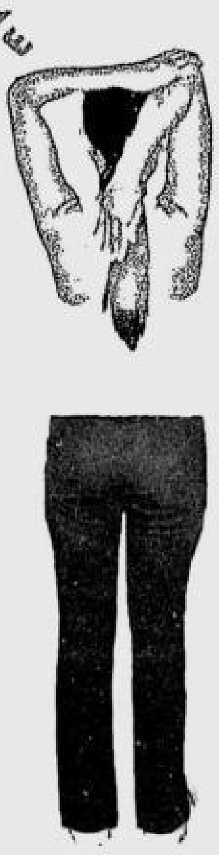
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

CLIP & SAVE

Triceps stretch



THIS EXERCISE NOT ONLY stretches the triceps (muscles at the back of the upper arm) but also increases flexibility of the shoulder joint.

Equipment:

None

Exercise technique:

1. Bring your right arm overhead, bend your elbow and reach between your shoulder blades. "Walk" your fingers down your back until you cannot go any further.
2. Place your left hand on your right elbow and gently press the arm inward and backward.
3. Hold for desired length of time.
4. Repeat on the other arm.

Performance tips:

1. Only stretch to the point of mild tension in the muscles, not to the point of pain.
2. The exercise can be done standing or sitting. Whichever position you choose, avoid arching your lower back.
3. If you have poor flexibility in the shoulder joint, you may not be able to bring the arm overhead. Do not force it. Your flexibility will improve in time.
4. You may be more flexible on one side. This is normal. However, if the difference is very large, this means that the inflexible side needs more stretching.

Repetitions:

Hold stretch for 10-30 seconds.

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

The amazing subconscious mind

MOST OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED my remote viewing session in the Young Presidents' Organization Convention in December in Phuket, Thailand, were able to perform it with great success.

In a remote viewing session, I taught participants how to project their consciousness or sense of awareness to a distant place that they have never visited or seen before and to describe it accurately.

To their great amazement, almost all of them succeeded in doing so.

Remote viewing or traveling clairvoyance has been extensively and scientifically studied and verified for 20 years at the Stanford Research Institute (now called SRI International) in Menlo Park, California, by two brilliant scientists with Ph.Ds in physics: Dr. Russell Targ and Dr. Harold Puthoff.

They proved that almost anybody can successfully learn how to perform remote viewing after only a brief explanation or training.

Incredible results

I have modified the scientific protocol developed at SRI and have had a discussion on the subject with Targ himself in the early 1990s. I have, since then, been teaching the technique worldwide for the last 15 years with incredible results.

In my modified version of remote viewing, a class is divided into pairs and the target place is the house of a partner. The remote viewer has never met the person before nor has s/he been to the house. All s/he is allowed to ask is his/her partner's full name.

I also tell the class to take a good look at each other's face for a few seconds so that, even if they forget the name, they can at least use the face as their connection to the target place.

In one of the sessions in Phuket, a woman who has never been to Hawaii described in detail her partner's house in Maui, which was not a typical Hawaiian house. It was completely European in design.

Another participant, for some strange reason, opened the refrigerator of her partner's house and saw only apples inside. She wondered about that and told her partner who explained that there was a power outage and she wanted to stock her refrigerator with fruits that would not spoil easily.

The partner had taken out all the contents of the fridge, leaving only the apples. She was shocked the other person described accurately her fridge's contents.

Mind's ability

In various remote viewing classes I've conducted over the years, I am constantly amazed at the things the human mind is capable of knowing without using the senses.

A house that burned down four years before was "seen" and accurately described in detail. A future house that had not even been bought yet was also described with great accuracy.

One time, even a pet dog that died two years earlier was also seen. And, in one remarkable case in Arizona, a man saw the secret four-digit security number code of his partner's house, known only to her and her husband.

Because of such shocking revelations, many have asked me how the phenomenon can be explained. "How can someone describe so accurately some peculiar detail in a house s/he has never seen before?"

The explanation cannot be accepted by the scientific-minded or hard-nosed scientists. Even doctors Targ and Puthoff were at a loss how to explain it. But they could not ignore the hard evidence they had so painstakingly collected for 20 years.

Storehouse

One possible explanation is we are all connected to all levels of creation through our subconscious minds. Our subconscious can know or be aware of things in the past, present or future. It is a storehouse of information not bound by time or space.

Our consciousness or awareness can be projected anywhere, given a particular target or place to tune in to.

For example, in the early stage of the experiments in remote viewing at SRI International, the subject, a well-known American psychic named Ingo Swann, was given only the coordinates of a place. Swann was able to describe what could be found there. It was verified to be accurate in every detail.

We still have not reached the limits of what our minds can do. In fact, the motto of my institute is: "The mind knows no limits, aside from those it accepts. We are the only ones who have placed limitations on our mind's capacities because of logic, science, religion and fear of the unknown.

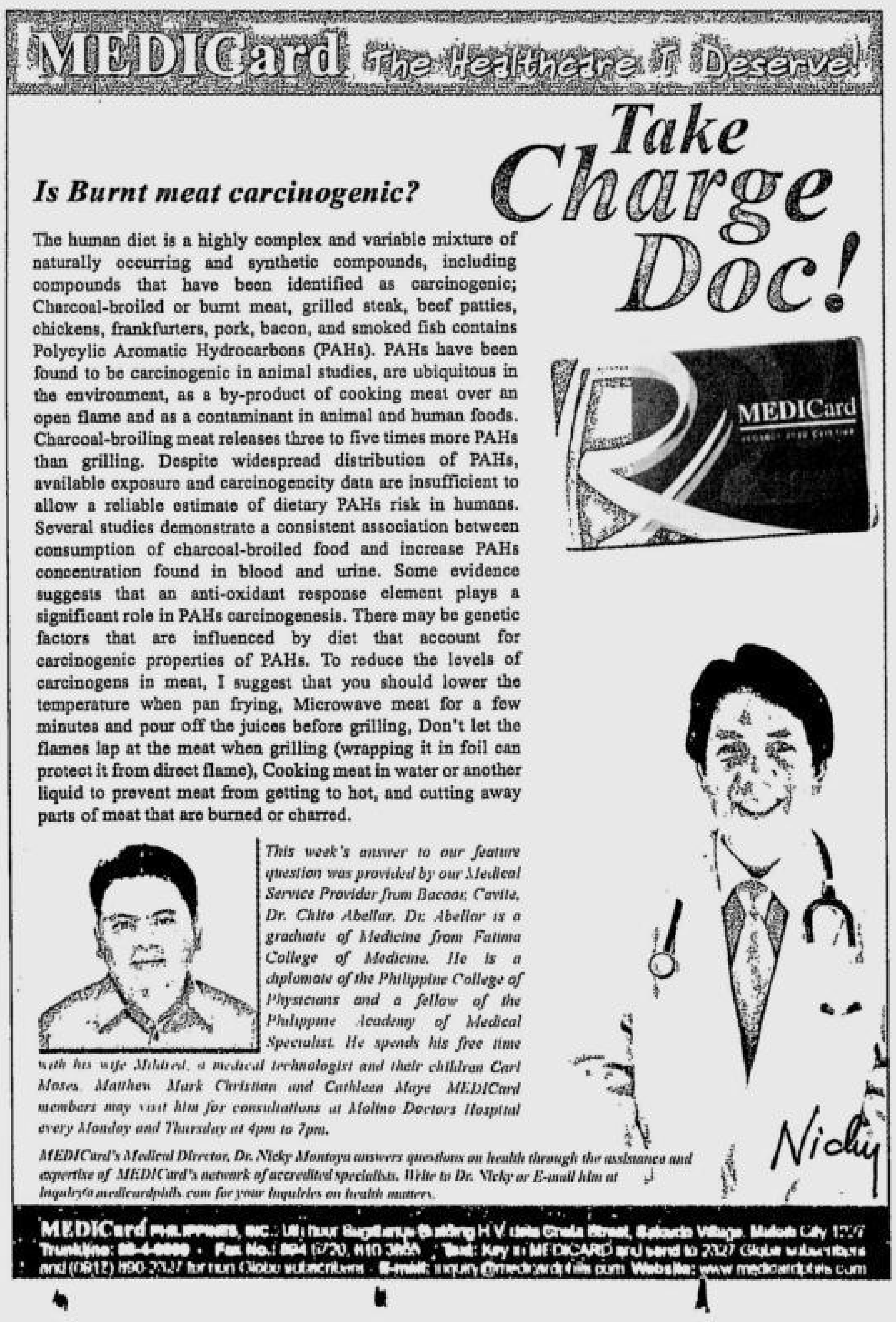
"If we can only eliminate all these factors or limitations from our consciousness, we can perform almost miraculous things with our minds, just like what a remarkable carpenter from Nazareth did over 2,000 years ago—and several others before him. And he once said that, 'All the works that I have done you can do, and much more than these.'"

But we don't believe it, do we?

Remote viewing is now being taught for use in military intelligence in certain countries. It has also been adopted for possible use in industrial espionage.

Certain ethical questions on invasion of privacy are bound to crop up. But that is another matter.

Note: The next Basic ESP & Intuition Development seminar will be held Jan. 27-28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 8107245 and 8926806, or fax 8159890. E-mail innerawareness_2005@yahoo.com.



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Is Burnt meat carcinogenic?

The human diet is a highly complex and variable mixture of naturally occurring and synthetic compounds, including compounds that have been identified as carcinogenic; Charcoal-broiled or burnt meat, grilled steak, beef patties, chickens, frankfurters, pork, bacon, and smoked fish contains Polycylic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs have been found to be carcinogenic in animal studies, are ubiquitous in the environment, as a by-product of cooking meat over an open flame and as a contaminant in animal and human foods. Charcoal-broiling meat releases three to five times more PAHs than grilling. Despite widespread distribution of PAHs, available exposure and carcinogencity data are insufficient to allow a reliable estimate of dietary PAHs risk in humans. Several studies demonstrate a consistent association between consumption of charcoal-broiled food and increase PAHs concentration found in blood and urine. Some evidence suggests that an anti-oxidant response element plays a significant role in PAHs carcinogenesis. There may be genetic factors that are influenced by diet that account for carcinogenic properties of PAHs. To reduce the levels of carcinogens in meat, I suggest that you should lower the temperature when pan frying, Microwave meat for a few minutes and pour off the juices before grilling, Don't let the flames lap at the meat when grilling (wrapping it in foil can protect it from direct flame), Cooking meat in water or another liquid to prevent meat from getting to hot, and cutting away parts of meat that are burned or charred.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our Medical Service Provider from Bacoor, Cavite, Dr. Chito Abellar. Dr. Abellar is a graduate of Medicine from Fatima College of Medicine. He is a diplomate of the Philippine College of Physicians and a fellow of the Philippine Academy of Medical Specialist. He spends his free time with his wife Mildred, a medical technologist and their children Carl Moses, Matthew Mark Christian and Cathleen Maye. MEDICard members may visit him for consultations at Molino Doctors Hospital every Monday and Thursday at 4pm to 7pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

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ENTERTAINMENT

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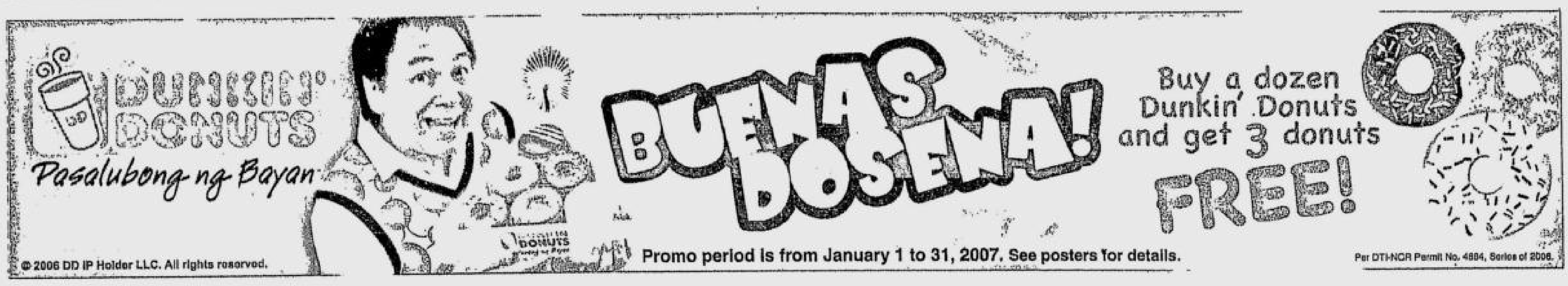
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Magic & music a perfect fit

By Cora Lucas

IT ALL STARTED WITH A SONG.

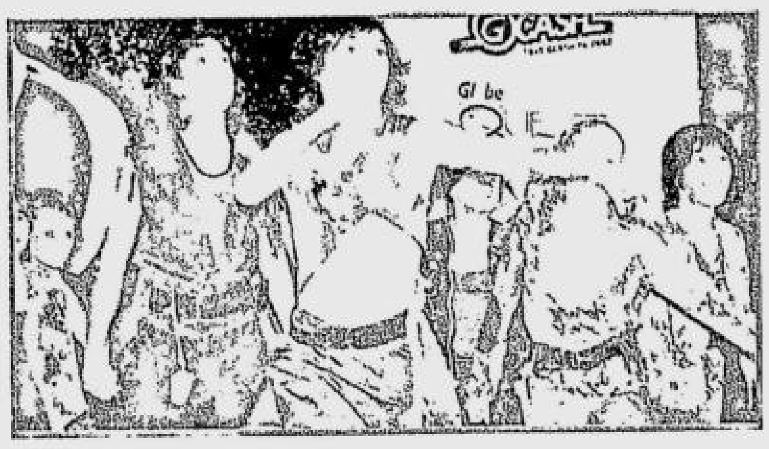
Matthew Gregory, executive producer and director of ABA Productions' musical adaptation of the J.M. Barrie classic "Peter Pan," had long wanted to mount the well-loved children's tale on stage. But it was only when he heard British classical composer Karl Jenkin's "Adiemus" that he got down to business.

What Gregory did was to link "the rich diversity of Karl's music with the magic of Neverland." He thought it fit just perfectly.

"Adiemus" is a series of albums by Jenkins, composed of songs with harmonized vocal melody set against an orchestral background. The songs have no actual lyrics, just concocted syllables.

"The music of 'Adiemus' is lyrical ... majestic, haunting and inspiring," says "Peter Pan" playwright and lyricist Ben Munroe. "It's reminiscent of Enya but is more choral in nature."

Munroe says Jenkins creates syllables and adapts them to music he has composed. When he first heard the "Adiemus" music, Munroe says, he knew it was "perfect for the fairies and Neverland of Peter Pan."


THE "PETER Pan" cast during the press preview

RUDY ESPERAS

Rights secured

Thrilled, Munroe and Gregory moved to secure the rights of Jenkins' works from the publishers and copyright holders.

Most of the songs used in the musical were taken from "The Journey," which is part of "Adiemus."

When Munroe's script was done in time for the 2005 inaugural Hong Kong run of the show, Gregory brought Filipino musical director Amuer Calderon on board to adapt Jenkins' music on stage, manage the choral work and compose original songs for the musical. Munroe and Calderon worked on the additional songs, with the former writing the lyrics and the latter composing the music.

Their collaboration, along with Jenkins' made-up "fairy language," sealed the musical.

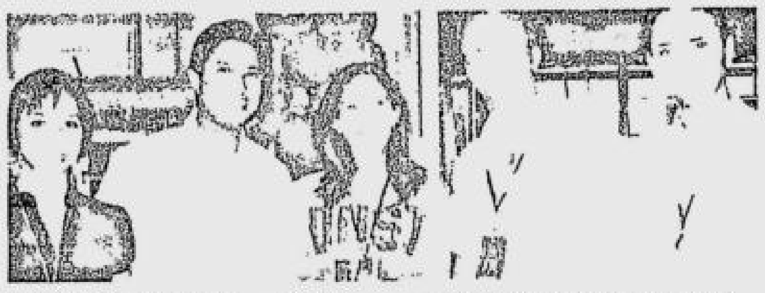
Fairy music

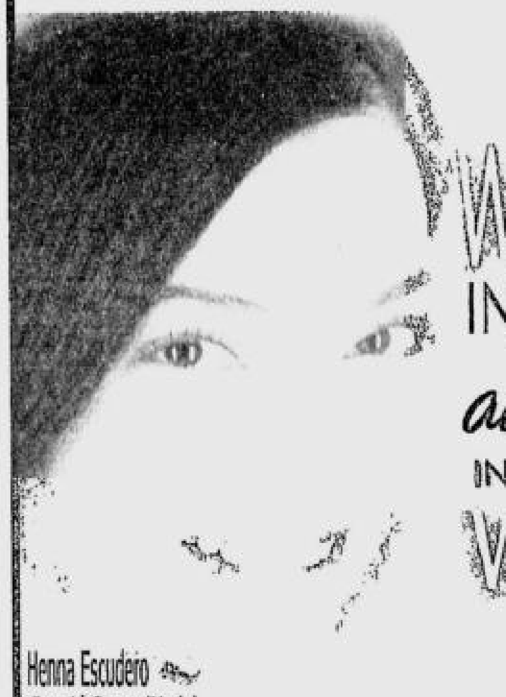
"At first we had doubts about including this 'fairy music'," admits Calderon, who teaches voice at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and performs onstage as actor, dancer and opera singer. "But just like in foreign movies, sometimes you ignore the subtitles and just watch the action and enjoy the show."

The Hong Kong-based musical director and composer/arranger co-wrote the English songs and some incidental music for the production.

Three days before opening day, Calderon, who claims to be new to musical directing, was still writing underscores for some parts of the musical mounted by the international theater company ABA Productions, which he says "should fit

MAGIC/ D2


CREATIVE TEAM. (from left) Choreographer Kitty Cortes, musical director Amuer Calderon, artistic director Emma York, playwright Ben Munroe and director and executive producer Matthew Gregory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Other stars' defining moments recalled

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AFTER OUR "DEFINING MOMENTS" piece on Vilma Santos' decades-long show biz career, we received requests to run similar recollections of other stars' career highlights.

But that would make for an inordinately extended series, so we've opted to do a rundown of requested stars' "signature" projects, the ones that established their unique personas and first captivated the entertainment audience.

For **Christopher de Leon**, it was his first starring vehicle, "Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang," directed by **Lino Brocka**. The acclaimed director plucked Christopher out of obscurity and made him an overnight star.

Indelible

THE YOUNG actor made such an indelible impression on viewers that he was later hailed as local movies' drama king, and is busy with TV and film assignments to this day, over 30 years later.

Aga Muhlach was only 14 when he starred in "Bagets." He did so well that he remains a bankable star.

Actually, "Bagets" wasn't his solo starrer, and he had to share the screen with other young comers. But Aga's performance and charisma shone through best of all, and his co-stars couldn't catch up with him.

What was Aga's ace advantage? Some fans single out his dimples, others say it's his soulful eyes. Best of all, Aga exudes an empathetic vulnerability that makes women want to take care of him.

Nora Aunor has had more than her share of career highlights, so a number of "signature" starrers come to mind:

In terms of her phenomenal popularity, some of her "Guy and Pip" starrers pushed her all the way to the top. As far as her reputation as an exceptional actress is concerned, some point to "Himala" as the Superstar's breakthrough film.

For our part, we believe it was "Bona" that first resoundingly affirmed her outstanding thespic prowess. In this movie, Nora played a movie fan who idolized an obscure action player (**Philip Salvador**). She put up with all sorts of harsh treatment from the ingrate, until she snapped and poured boiling water over him!

Nora played Bona so well, she veritably "disappeared" into the role, reaping praise from film buffs here and abroad.

For **Rudy Fernandez**, it was "Baby Ama" that effected his transition from boy-next-door type to young action star.

Screen stardom came early to **Fernando Poe Jr.** He was only 14 when, after the sudden death of his father, the senior Fernando Poe, he was forced to become the man in the family and starred in his first action film, "Anak ni Palaris."

Later, **Joseph Estrada** co-starred with FPJ and other young comers in the "Lo Waist Gang" film series, but it was "Geron Busabos, Ang Batang Quiapo" that first established his reputation as an outstanding actor.

For Dolphy and **Lolita Rodriguez**, it was "Jack en Jill," where they played a gay and tomboy, respectively. Dolphy went on to become the country's comedy king, while Lolita was hailed as a superlative dramatic actress, before she opted to move to the United States.

For **Susan Roces**, the star-maker was "Boksingera." **Amalia Fuentes** and **Juancho Gutierrez** became movie actors by way of a search for exceptionally good-looking new stars, Mr. and Miss No. 1. Amalia went on to marry **Romeo Vasquez**; Juancho tied the knot with **Gloria Romero**.

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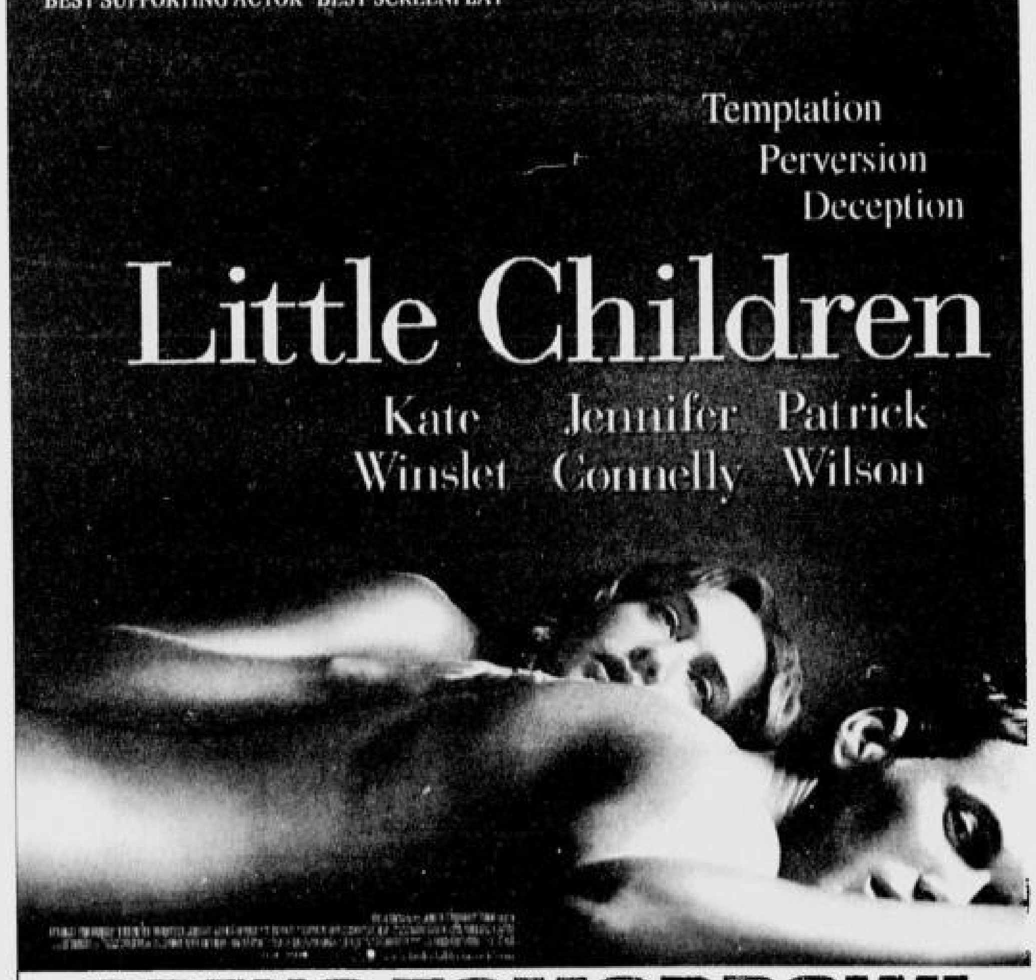

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9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

10 ROB-B-HOOD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA 636-7808 to 12

1 DEJA VU
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10.00

2 ROB-B-HOOD 12:00 2:15
BLOOD DIAMOND 4:40 7:20 10:00

3 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
12.30 2.50 5:10 7.30 9:50

4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

5 AGENT X44
12:30 2:50 5.10 7:30 10:00

6 SAW 3
12.30 2.50 5:10 7:25 10.00

7 ERAGON
12.30 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8939; 682-8199

1 ROB-B-HOOD
1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00

2 AGENT X44
11.50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

3 DEJA VU
12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

5 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:10 3:00 5:55 9:00

6 SAW 3
11.10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

7 ERAGON
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES [illegible]

1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X44
4 SAW 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ROB-B-HOOD

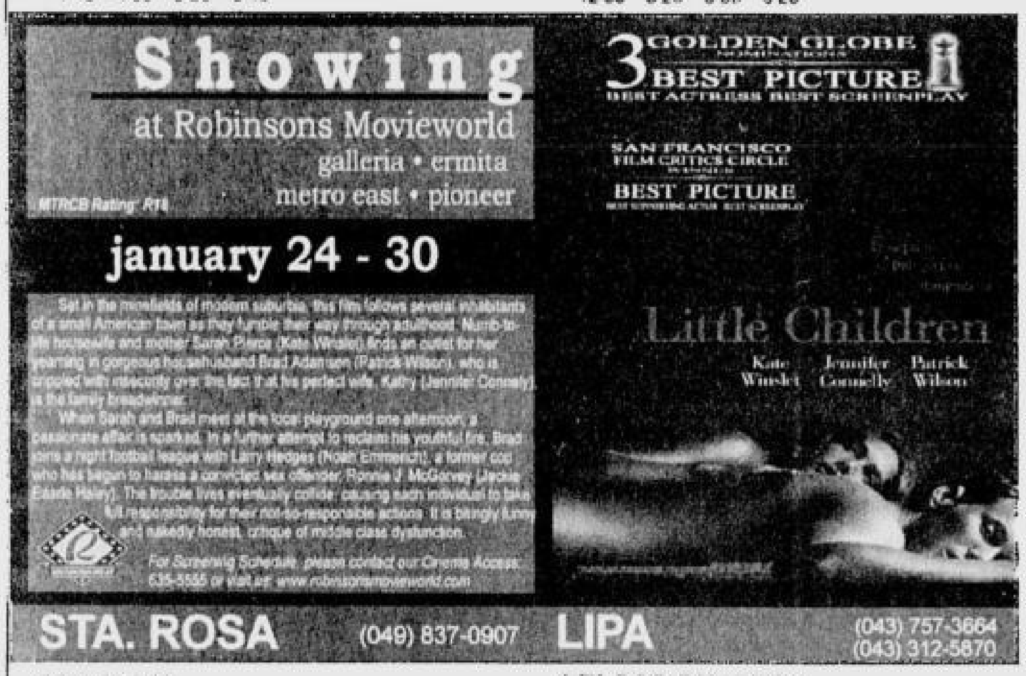
PIONEER [illegible]

1 DEJA VU
1:15 3:45 6:15 8.40

2 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

3 AGENT X44
1:40 4.00 6:20 8:40

4 SAW 3
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20



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MTRCB Rating: R14

january 24 - 30

Set in the minefields of modern suburbia, this film follows several inhabitants of a small American town as they fumble their way through adulthood. Numb-to-life housewife and mother Sarah Pierce (Kate Winslet) finds an outlet for her yearning in gorgeous househusband Brad Adamson (Patrick Wilson), who is crippled with insecurity over the fact that his perfect wife, Kathy (Jennifer Connely) is the family breadwinner.

When Sarah and Brad meet at the local playground one afternoon, a passionate affair is sparked. In a further attempt to reclaim his youthful fire, Brad joins a night football league with Larry Hedges (Noah Emmerich), a former cop who has begun to harass a convicted sex offender, Ronnie J. McGorvey (Jackie Earle Haley). The trouble lives eventually collide, causing each individual to take full responsibility for their not-so-responsible actions. It is bitingly funny and nakedly honest, critique of middle class dysfunction.

For Screening Schedule, please contact our Cinema Access: 635-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

3 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE
BEST ACTRESS BEST SCREENPLAY

SAN FRANCISCO FILM CRITICS CIRCLE WINNER
BEST PICTURE

Little Children
Kate Winslet Jennifer Connelly Patrick Wilson

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1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 SAW 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 AGENT X44

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 AGENT X44
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 DEJA VU

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 DEJA VU
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 SAW 3
4 AGENT X44

ANGELES (045) 892-23[illegible]

1 DEJA VU
2 AGENT X44
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SAW 3

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 SAW 3
3 ERAGON
4 DEJA VU
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 AGENT X44

STARMILLS (045) 875-1923 (045) 961-5270

1 DEJA VU
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 AGENT X44
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 SAW 3
6 ERAGON

BACOLOD (034) 441-0463 (034) 441-04[illegible]

1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X44
4 DECK THE HALLS
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 KAMASUTRA 3

ILOILO [illegible]

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 AGENT X44
4 DEJA VU
5 TENACIOUS D
6 DECK THE HALLS

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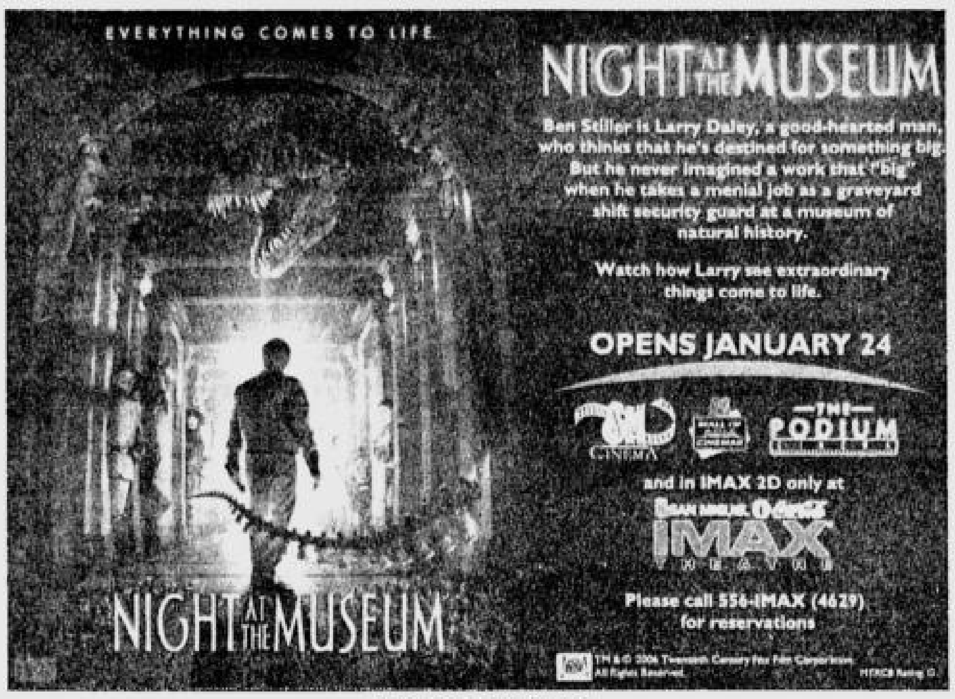

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MTRCB Rating: G

METRO MANILA

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San Miguel Coca-Cola IMAX
T-REX IN 3D
11:45AM 1:00PM 2:15PM 3:30PM 4:45PM
Admission Fee- P200
HAPPY FEET IN 2D
7:15PM
Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
SANTA VS THE SNOWMAN
6:00PM
Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
DEJA VU
BLOOD DIAMOND
ERAGON
ROB-B-HOOD
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH/
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
PREMIERE CINEMA
AGENT X44
CENTERSTAGE
ERAGON
PODIUM
CINEMA 1
ERAGON
CINEMA 2
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SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
ERAGON
ROB-B-HOOD
ERAGON
DEJA VU
AGENT X44
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
BLOOD DIAMOND
AGENT X44

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ENTENG KABISOTE 3
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ERAGON
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
DEJA VU
ERAGON
AGENT X44
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
ROB-B-HOOD
BLOOD DIAMOND
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SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
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ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
ROB-B-HOOD
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AGENT X44

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AGENT X44
AGENT X44
ERAGON
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
BLOOD DIAMOND
ROB-B-HOOD
ENTENG KABISOTE 3

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ROB-B-HOOD
ERAGON

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
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ROB-B-HOOD
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AGENT X44
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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BLOOD DIAMOND
DEJA VU
AGENT X44

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
DEJA VU
ERAGON
AGENT X44
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
DEJA VU
AGENT X44
ERAGON
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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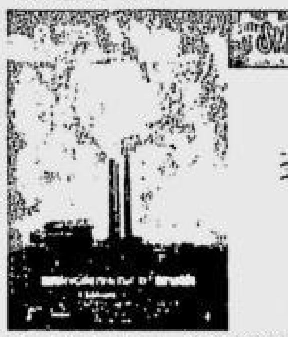

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AGENT X44
ROB-B-HOOD
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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DEJA VU
AGENT X44
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ROB-B-HOOD
DEJA VU
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ERAGON
AGENT X44

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ERAGON
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ERAGON
DEJA VU
AGENT X44

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ERAGON
DEJA VU
A GOOD YEAR
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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AGENT X44
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DEJA VU
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AGENT X44
ERAGON

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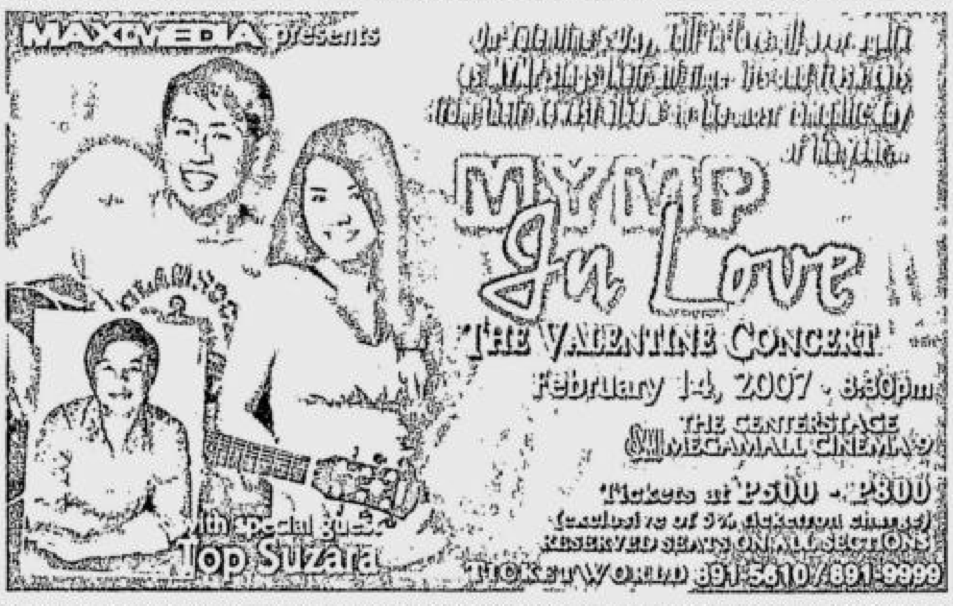
SHOWTIME Event Calendar



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Music & magic...

From page D1

perfectly (again!) in the dialogues." The music of "Peter Pan," he adds, is "still evolving."

One of his notable compositions for the musical is "Fairy Queen's Lullaby," which he co-wrote with Munroe. The song brings the kids back home from Neverland. He also composed with Munroe "Lost Boys' Groove," "Everything Here Dies With Disbelief," "We All Wanna Be Captain Hook" and "Hook's Song."

Right blend

How were they able to blend their music with that of Jenkins?

"It's more of blending the music with the story," explains Munroe. "The script of our 'Peter Pan' was written with Karl's music already in place. For example, we knew which song we wanted to underscore a battle scene or the Lost Boys' home underground."

With Jenkins' "fairy" music and the first draft of the script done, Munroe says they thought some English songs were necessary.

"The pirates, for example, would not express themselves in fairy language so we wrote them a couple of numbers to help establish character and background."

Other than the original music, Munroe names the following factors that make the musical different from other "Peter Pan" versions staged before: brand-new script; spectacular flying (at one stage, three children, one fairy, Peter Pan and Nana the dog); Peter Pan is played by a boy rather than a woman actor (as happens in pantomime); Nana flies to Neverland (by mistake); fairies go onstage (not just theatrical effects); scenes in the "real world" are much shorter, leaving more time for Neverland; and a live choir onstage.

Calderon also boasts of his very own choreographed battle scenes.

Sense of wonder

"We have created a show that should give audiences a sense of wonder and astonishment they would have felt if they had been at the first performance over 100 years ago, and one that also remained true to contemporary theater practices and performing styles," says Munroe.

The musical has an international cast of adult and child actors and live musicians, plus a full choir—the UST Action Singers Alumni Ensemble—onstage.

"Peter Pan," which is on a month-long weekend run at the CCP Main Theater, is on the first leg of its Asian tour, with Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur next in line. Calderon says they are still waiting for word in Taiwan and Sydney, which should complete its year-round tour.

'Bayaning 3rd World' one-day screening

THOSE WHO SAW "BAYANING 3rd World" six years ago remember his post-modern take on the centennial fever obsession: Jose Rizal.

Mike De Leon sends his characters—a director (Ricky Davao) and a writer (Cris Villanueva) on the verge of a creating a great Rizal film—on a historical adventure about the controversial hero.

The Independent Filmmakers Cooperative (IFC) presents a one-day screening of the film within a film at IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria, Jan. 25. Call 632-9116.

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DAVID BOWIE
ARTHUR
AND THE INVISIBLES

SHANG CINEPLEX

① **ERAGON**
MTRCB GP
1 00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00

② **DÉJÀ VU**
MTRCB PG-13
2 00, 4 40, 7 20, 10.00

③ **BLOOD DIAMOND**
MTRCB R-13
1.00, 4.00, 7.00, 10.00

④ **SAW 3**
MTRCB R-18
2 30, 4 50, 7.10, 9.30

PREMIERE THEATRE
ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES
MTRCB GP
2 30, 5 00, 7 30, 10 00

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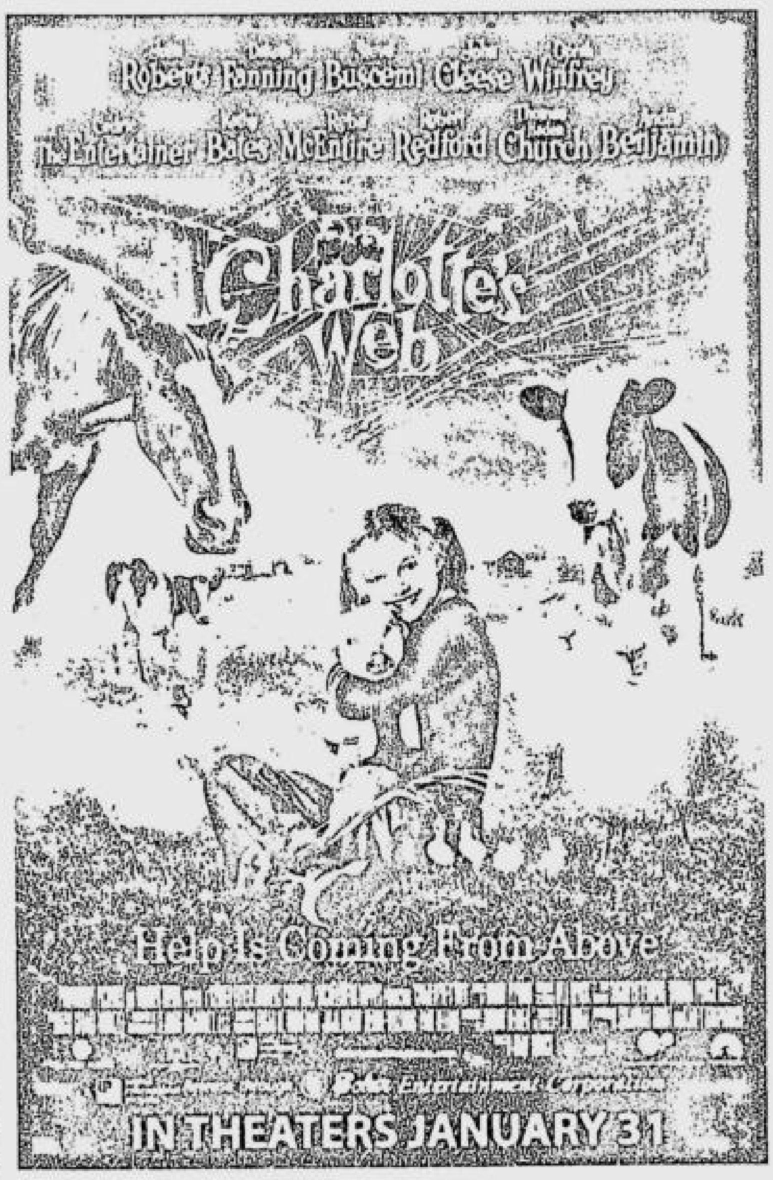
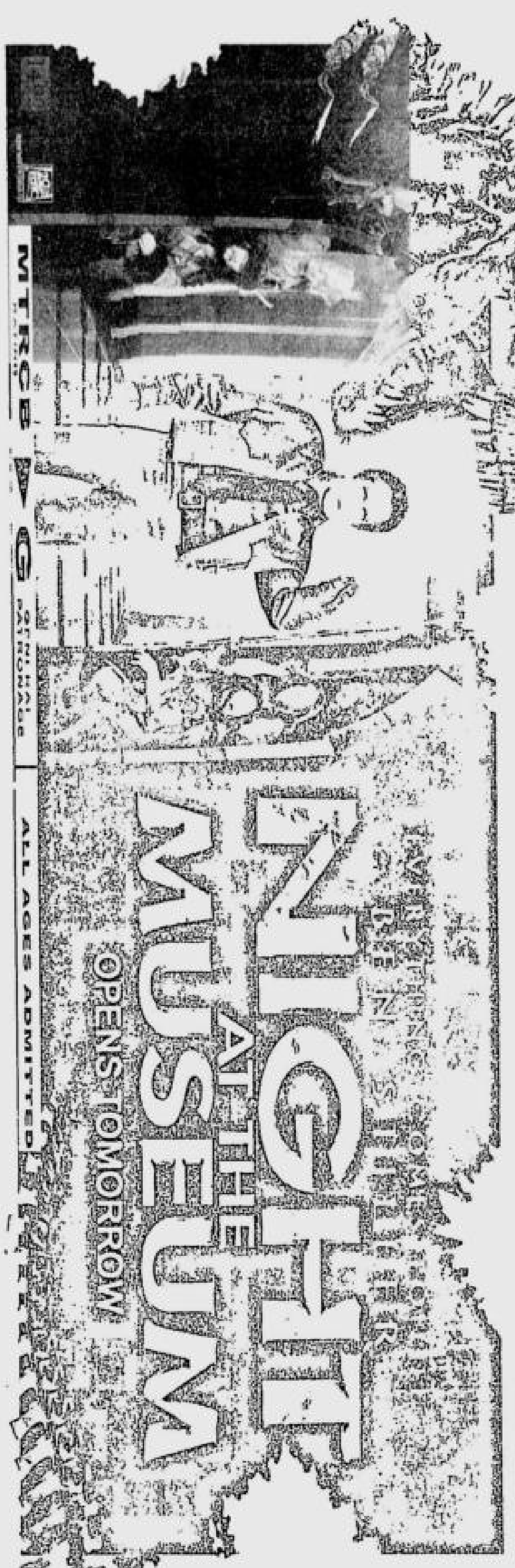

Roberts Fanning Buscemi Cleese Winfrey
The Entertainer Bates McEntire Redford Church Benjamin
Charlotte's Web
Help Is Coming From Above
IN THEATERS JANUARY 31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THX

G1	1 SAW 3	2 DÉJÀ VU	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 AGENT X44			
G4	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 THX DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	4 INNOCENT VOICES	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	6 ERAGON	7 SAW 3
GB1	1 SAW 3	2 DÉJÀ VU					
GB3	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	3 INNOCENT VOICES GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SAW 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC	1 THX DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	2 ERAGON	3 SAW 3	4 AGENT X44	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES		
ACC	1 DÉJÀ VU	2 SAW 3	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 AGENT X44			
M2	1 AGENT X44	2 DÉJÀ VU	3 SAW 3	4 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	5 KASAL KASALI KASALO		

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Artbeat Album Launching January 28, 2007	Nestle Breakfast Cereals Event January 6 to 7, 2007

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January 24 to February 4, 2007

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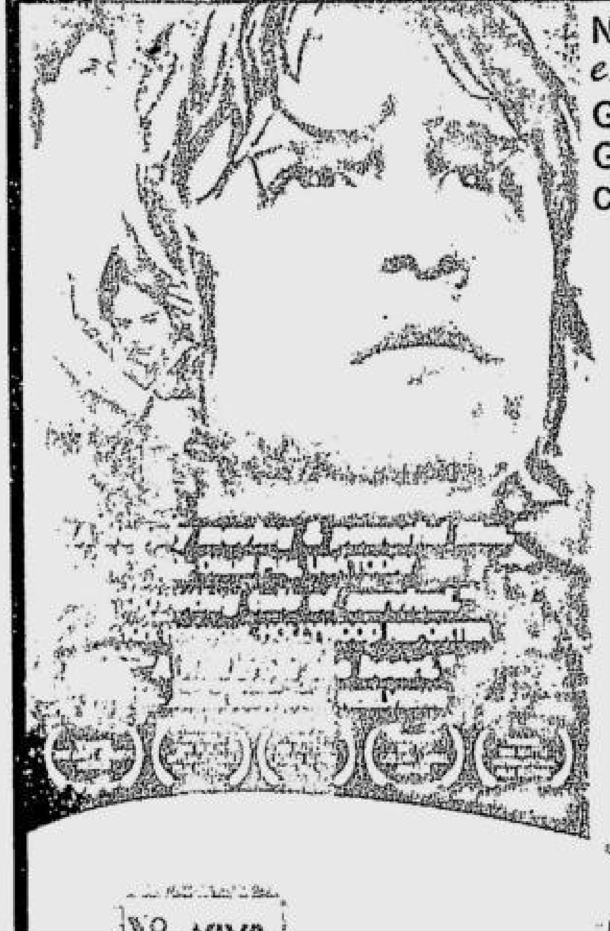

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2 (DOLBY) DÉJÀ VU
3 (DOLBY) BLOOD DIAMOND
4 (DOLBY) SAW 3
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) ARTHUR & INVISIBLES

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3 AGENT X 44
4 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES

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(Mandaluyong) tel. 7260160
3 AGENT X 44
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) DÉJÀ VU
5 RESRVED

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1 AGENT X 44
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 ERAGON
4 SAW

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2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU

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2 DÉJÀ VU
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

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2 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 ERAGON
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 DÉJÀ VU
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 AGENT X 44
9 AGENT X 44
10 KASAL KASALI KASALO

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2 (DOLBY) AGENT X 44
3 (DOLBY) DÉJÀ VU
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

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2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X 44
4 ARTHUR & INVIBIBLES
5 SAW

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2 DÉJÀ VU
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 RESERVED

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2 DÉJÀ VU
3 SAW

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2 DÉJÀ VU

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1 DÉJÀ VU
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
3 SAW
4 ERAGON

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(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
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2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2 (DOLBY) ERAGON
3 (DOLBY) DÉJÀ VU
4 (DOLBY) SAW 3

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 ERAGON
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 AGENT X 44
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111140
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 ERAGON

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 DÉJÀ VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X 44

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 AGENT X 44
2 MANO PO - 5

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 KASAL KASALI KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

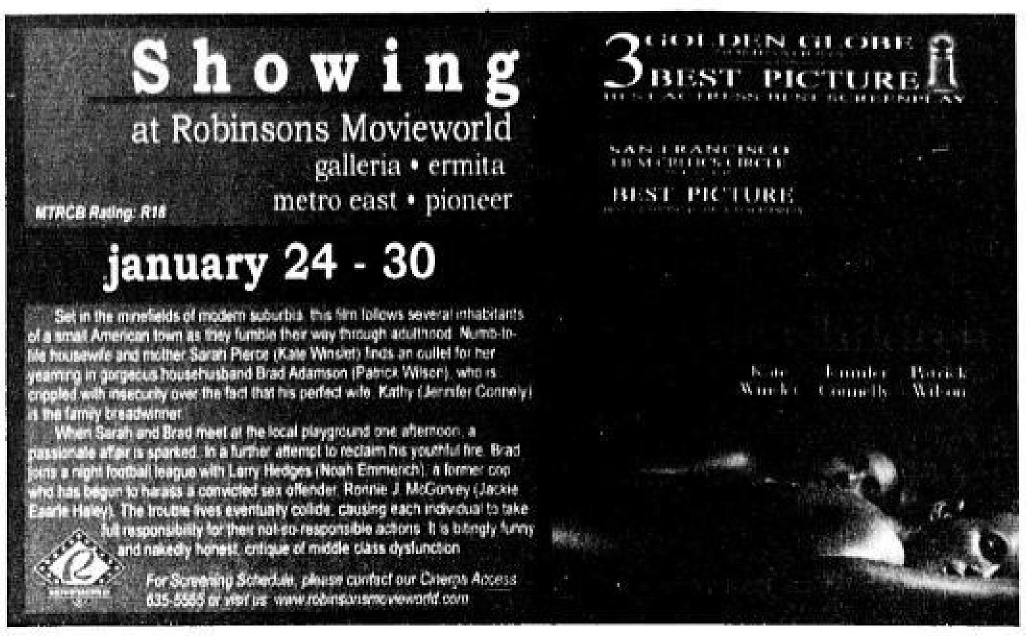
Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 PURI
3 SABIK SA HALIK
4 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 DÉJÀ VU
2 BABASAGIN CRYSTAL
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 AGENT X 44
5 ERAGON

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X 44
4 DÉJÀ VU

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 ARTHUR & INVISIBLE
2 ROB-B-HOOD

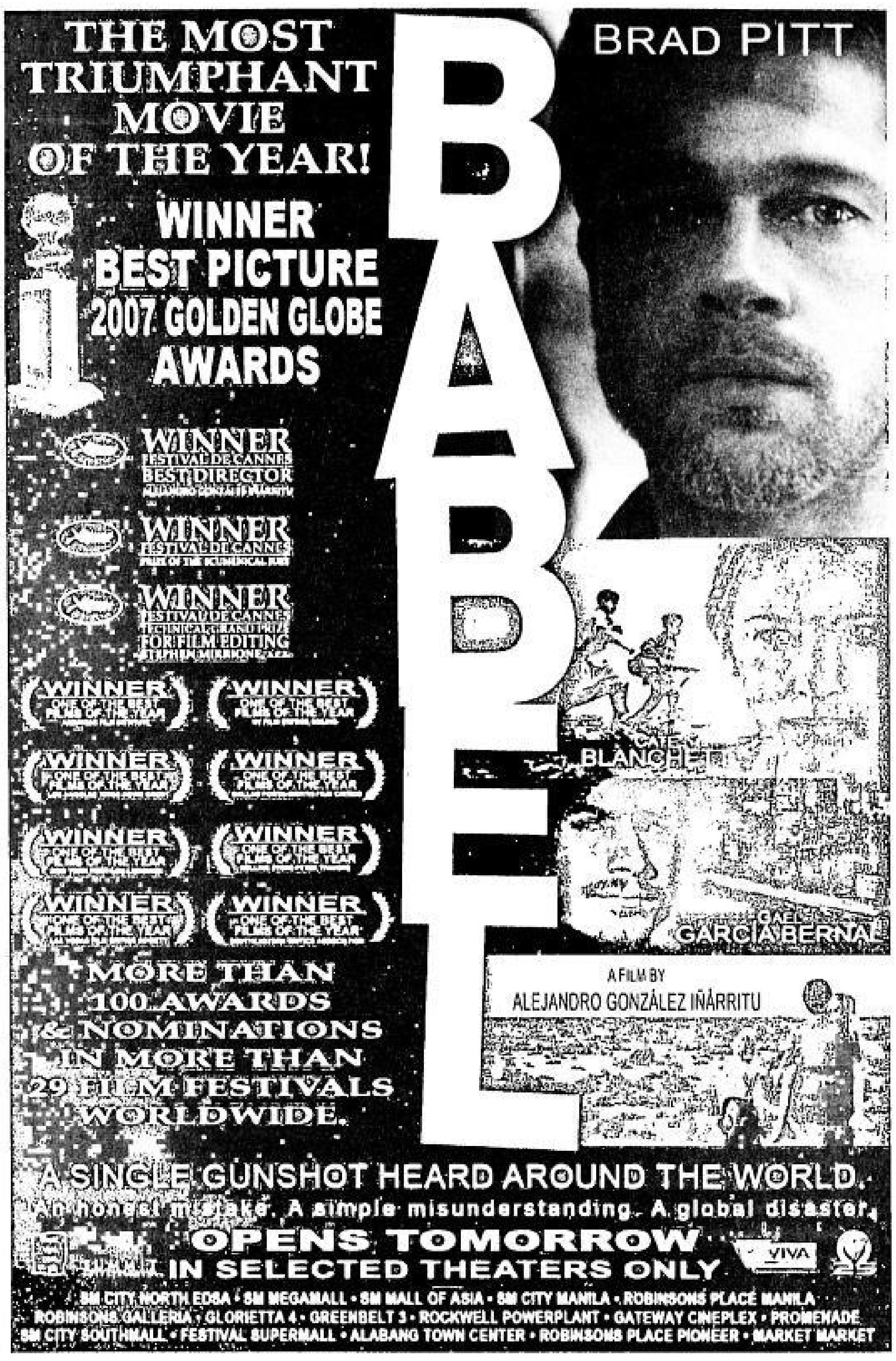
MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

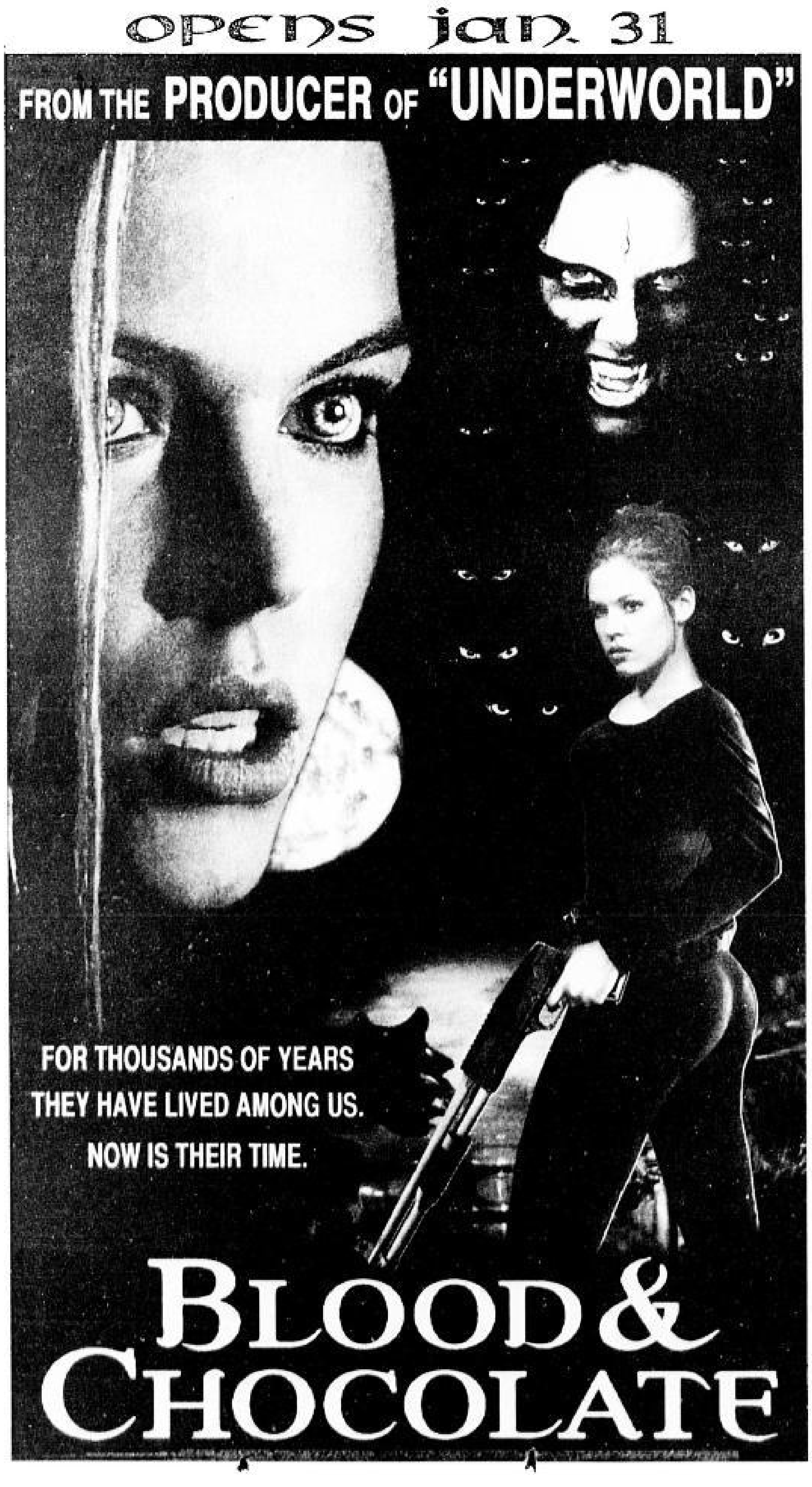

Showing at Robinsons Movieworld
galleria • ermita
metro east • pioneer
MTRCB Rating: R18
january 24 - 30

Set in the minefields of modern suburbia, this film follows several inhabitants of a small American town as they fumble their way through adulthood. Numb-to-life housewife and mother Sarah Pierce (Kate Winslet) finds an outlet for her yearning in gorgeous househusband Brad Adamson (Patrick Wilson), who is crippled with insecurity over the fact that his perfect wife, Kathy (Jennifer Connely) is the family breadwinner.

When Sarah and Brad meet at the local playground one afternoon, a passionate affair is sparked. In a further attempt to reclaim his youthful fire, Brad joins a night football league with Larry Hedges (Noah Emmerich), a former cop who has begun to harass a convicted sex offender, Ronnie J. McGorvey (Jackie Earle Haley). The trouble lives eventually collide, causing each individual to take full responsibility for their not-so-responsible actions. It is bitingly funny and nakedly honest critique of middle class dysfunction.

For Screening Schedule, please contact our Cinema Access 635-5565 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com
3 GOLDEN GLOBE BEST PICTURE
SAN FRANCISCO FILM CRITICS CIRCLE
BEST PICTURE
Kate Winslet
Jennifer Connelly
Patrick Wilson

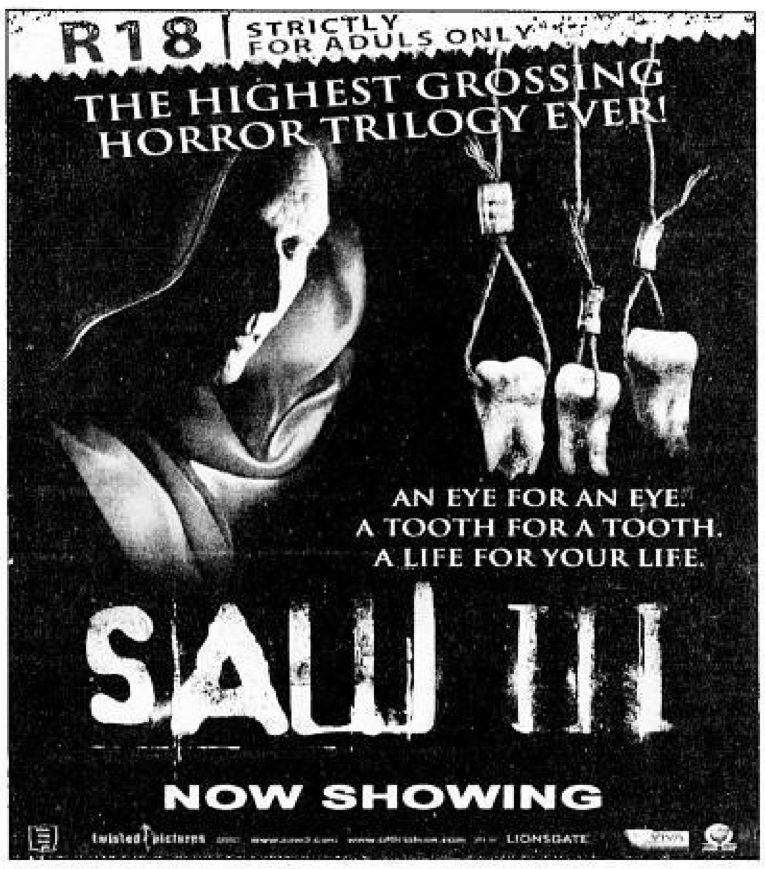

THE MOST TRIUMPHANT MOVIE OF THE YEAR!
WINNER BEST PICTURE 2007 GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS
MORE THAN 100 AWARDS & NOMINATIONS IN MORE THAN 29 FILM FESTIVALS WORLDWIDE.
A SINGLE GUNSHOT HEARD AROUND THE WORLD.
An honest mistake. A simple misunderstanding. A global disaster.
OPENS TOMORROW
IN SELECTED THEATERS ONLY
SM CITY NORTH EDSA • SM MEGAMALL • SM MALL OF ASIA • SM CITY MANILA • ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA • ROBINSONS GALLERIA • GLORIETTA 4 • GREENBELT 3 • ROCKWELL POWERPLANT • GATEWAY CINEPLEX • PROMENADE • SM CITY SOUTHMALL • FESTIVAL SUPERMALL • ALABANG TOWN CENTER • ROBINSONS PLACE PIONEER • MARKET MARKET
BABEL
BRAD PITT
CATE BLANCHETT
GAEL GARCIA BERNAL
A FILM BY ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU
WINNER FESTIVAL DE CANNES BEST DIRECTOR
WINNER FESTIVAL DE CANNES
WINNER FESTIVAL DE CANNES TECHNICAL GRAND PRIZE FOR FILM EDITING
WINNER ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR
VIVA


OPENS JAN. 31
FROM THE PRODUCER OF "UNDERWORLD"
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS THEY HAVE LIVED AMONG US. NOW IS THEIR TIME.
BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

AGENT X44 **PG13** 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50	**SAW III** **R18** 1:50,4:00	**ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES** **G** 1:25,3:40,5:55,8:10
BLOOD DIAMOND **R13** 1:25,4:25,7:25,10:25	**ERAGON** **G** 1:30,3:50,6:10,8:30	**DÉJÀ VU** **PG13** 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41


R18 STRICTLY FOR ADULS ONLY
THE HIGHEST GROSSING HORROR TRILOGY EVER!
AN EYE FOR AN EYE.
A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.
A LIFE FOR YOUR LIFE.
SAW III
NOW SHOWING
twisted pictures LIONSGATE VIVA

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA		
1	ERAGON 11:20, 1:55, 4:30 7:05, 9:40	GP
2	SAW 3 11:00, 1:20,3:40, 6:00, 8:20, 10:35	R-18

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinertertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA		
3	BLOOD DIAMOND 11:45, 3:00, 6:15 9:30	R-13
4	ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES 12:00, 2:35, 5:10 7:45, 10:20	GP
5	DEJA VU 11:00, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45, 10:20	PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

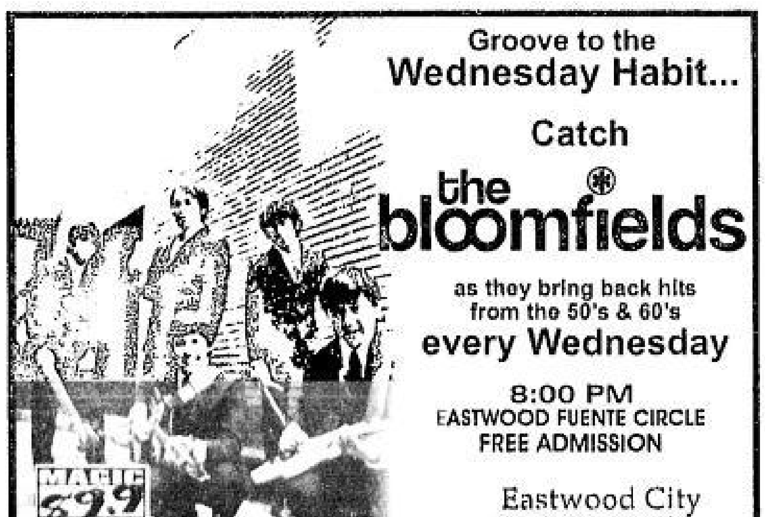
MUSIC MUSEUM

Jan 23, 2007	Marissa Sanchez	8:30 PM
Feb 02 & 03, 2007	Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby	8:30 PM
Feb 7 & 8, 2007	Agot Isidro "Back to Basics"	8:30 PM
Feb 13 & 14, 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
JAN. 23, 30, 2007	DYOROS KO PO	8:30 PM
JAN. 24, 2007	"PAKNERS" 9 Ball Celebrity Challenge	6:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635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as they bring back hits from the 50's & 60's
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687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 G
2	ERAGON 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 G
3	DÉJÀ VU 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:05 PG-13
4	SAW 3 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 R-18

ACPAPP

On its 26th year, the Association of Certified Public Accountants in Public Practice raises the bar of excellence by -

Keeping the high grade in a very challenging practice environment

As ACPAPP moves into 2007, the new Board of Directors takes pride in its commitment to maintain and grow the high marks the association has earned in the last 25 years. At no time in its history has ACPAPP put so much emphasis on the challenges that drive its members to excel in high performance work, deliver on the promise for consistent quality, and move the profession to yet greater future expectations.

Today's challenges are more difficult and ever increasing, and that makes it imperative for professional accountants to keep up with the demand for a wide resource of expertise and knowledge. As the world becomes smaller and business more globally accessible, ACPAPP members compel themselves to grow in excellence and overcome difficulties, with the enduring qualities that are worth the public's trust and confidence.

2007 ACPAPP BOARD OF DIRECTORS, seated from left: Benjamin C. Hortelano, Grace L. Morfe, Judith V. Lopez, Reynaldo S. Altre. Standing, from left: Jessie C. Carpio, Alexander D. Pascual, Evely L. Chun Peng, Adelaida N. Gatdula, Emily L. Cailles-Lo, Dan C. Bañas, Arminda T. Acyatan-Guerrero, Reginald C. Nery. Not in photo: Melissa S. Delgado, Emiliano G. Lorenzo, Jr., Emerson P. Redor

2007 ACPAPP Board of Directors

This is an auspicious occasion for Board of Accountancy Chair Eugene T. Mateo to induct the 2007 ACPAPP Board of Directors, led by President Judith V. Lopez.

The 15-member ACPAPP Board has a balanced representation from large, medium-sized, and small accounting firms, who have committed to support and implement the hallmark activities that will define the banner theme of "Keeping the high grade in a very challenging practice environment."

Each year the Board reiterates their commitment to carry out the ACPAPP mandate to promote and maintain high professional standards of practice and ethical standards, and protect the interests of CPAs in public practice. The programs and activities are designed for the maximum benefit of members who can expect initiatives that further enhance, preserve and build on the good standing of the professional accounting practice.

The high marks ACPAPP can claim on its scorecard are the offerings of the completed four-level Business Assurance Seminars (developed by the ACPAPP Foundation); the annual conventions - the 6th ANC having been held in Baguio City last year with Department of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus as keynote speaker; a stronger voice in the development of and compliance with international accounting and auditing standards; a responsive and increasing membership that reaches the provincial CPAs in public practice; and a close professional working relationship among large, medium-sized and small accounting firms.

At the 6th ANC, Secretary Lapus challenged ACPAPP to entrust some of their resources to quality education for good governance and professional excellence. He said that quality education is key to good governance, because it provides the foundation on which to build respect for human dignity and achieve excellence. He added that it is an important resource that empowers the learner to make informed and responsible choices. He cited the "Adopt A School" program as a way to invest in the future today—a call which ACPAPP responded favorably in a convention resolution.

> Today's challenges are more difficult and ever increasing, and that makes it imperative for professional accountants to keep up with the demand for a wide resource of expertise and knowledge

DEPED Secretary Jesli Lapus stresses a point in his keynote speech at the 6th Annual National Convention in Baguio held from Sept. 28 to 30, 2006. Seated are: Judith V. Lopez, Baguio City Mayor Reinaldo A. Bautista, Jr. and Jerome Antonio B. Constantino

Since 2001, ACPAPP has organized the Annual National Conventions. The first one was held in Subic, Zambales, and was followed by those in Cagayan de Oro, Tagaytay, Clark - Pampanga, Lipa, and Baguio.

ACPAPP lives on

ACPAPP began in 1981 as an association of individual public practitioners. Through the years, it grew in membership and evolved into a more cohesive organization of institutional members (or accounting firms) now numbering around 200 nationwide). These firms, who in turn designate their partners or senior staff as individual members in ACPAPP, have enlisted a total of some 400 individual practitioners.

Twenty-five years hence, ACPAPP has developed into a stronger organization with a permanent office and full-time secretariat. It has a calendar year full of professional development activities that includes comprehensive courses in Business Assurance Seminars; updates on international accounting and auditing standards, taxation, and relevant regulatory announcements; annual national convention; monthly membership meetings; emerging issues and advocacy forums; website; publications; and fellowship and sports activities.

Regular monthly membership meetings have always been the core of ACPAPP's year-round activities. Prominent personalities and experts in the profession, industry and government are invited to speak on current and relevant issues, and have always attracted sizeable attendance by members.

ONCE AGAIN, THE COMPETITION HAS MORE CATCHING UP TO DO.
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Look for this logo on the Ford Focus, a Flex Fuel Vehicle capable of 20% ethanol.

2007 ACPAPP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ACPAPP

In the New Economy, there are higher standards in demands for efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness. As CPAs with a mission - those of being the business world's most trusted advisors, it becomes necessary for all of you to be professionally competent and most of all adhere to the Standards of Professional Excellence. You must continue to pursue what is right with compassion and dedication, strong sense of morality, independence and integrity

• ***Hon. Eugene T. Mateo***
Chairman, Board of Accountancy
Message at the 6th Annual National Convention

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7th Annual National Convention

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GSIS's Mutual Fund Yields 40% in 2006

The partnership started in the year 2003 and has from then on consistently provided respectable returns to its stakeholders. Previously perceived a laggard in the "balanced" mutual fund category, Philam Asset Management, Inc. (PAMI), through its diligent and active fund management services, has breathed new life to the GSIS "Kinabukasan" Mutual Fund, Inc. (GMFI) by providing it with a 23.78% yield in 2003, 16.82% yield in 2004 and 13.85% yield in 2005. Four years of acting as Fund Manager to the GMFI, PAMI has once again achieved a new milestone for the fund. The fund manager has performed for the GMFI a whopping 40.00% yield for the year 2006. To date, this has been the highest yield that the GMFI has posted since its launch in 1998.

For those interested in investing with the GMFI, Government employees are given the benefit of participating in the fund with as low as Php1000.00 contribution per individual while those who are not from the government may also start their investments with the fund with a minimum investment of Php 5,000.00.

To inquire on how to start your savings program with the GSIS Mutual Fund, Inc., call GSIS office through 551-5519, 551-1881 and 891-6161 loc. 4937.

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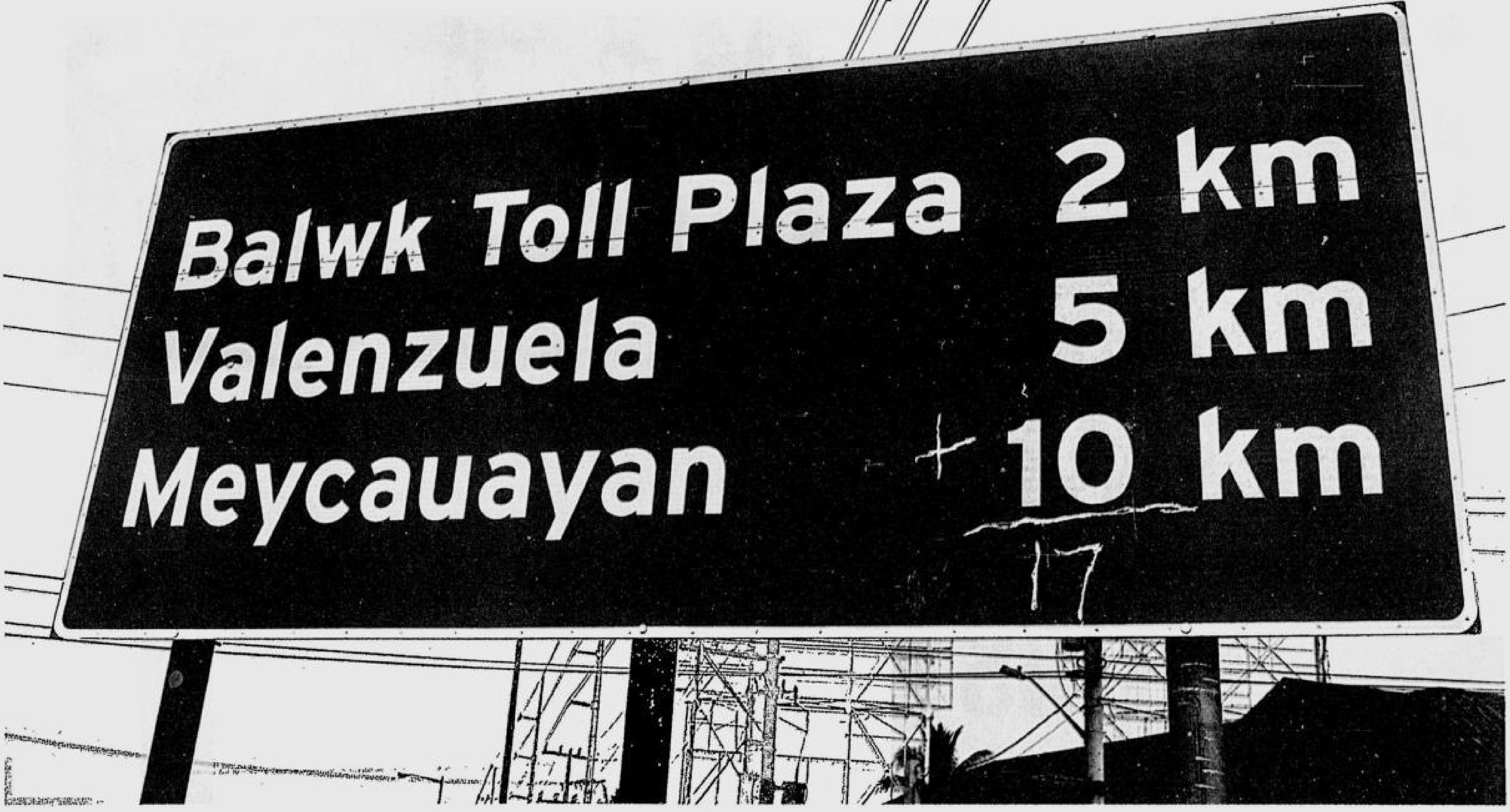
Balwk Toll Plaza 2 km
Valenzuela 5 km
Meycauayan 10 km
17

Why can't I come home?

- Ninoy Aquino

Dare to ask.
Be an Inquirer.

INQUIRER

ACPAPP Foundation

President, ACPAPP Foundation
Jerome Antonio B. Constantino
Constantino, Guadalquiver & Co.

To strengthen the development of professional development programs, ACPAPP created the ACPAPP Foundation for the primary purpose of providing ACPAPP members with the necessary professional development programs and training facilities that are aimed to enhance competencies of CPAs in public practice.

The ACPAPP Foundation Board of Trustees this year is headed by Jerome Antonio B. Constantino, the immediate past president of ACPAPP. As a practice, the outgoing president of ACPAPP automatically assumes the position of Foundation President after the stint at ACPAPP.

ACPAPP's regular offerings of seminars are also being subscribed to by non-ACPAPP members. Foremost among the beneficiaries are ACPAPP members who may not have access to training resources, members in ACPAPP Chapters in Cebu, Central Luzon and Davao, where roll-outs have been conducted and continue to be in demand there.

The other trustees are:

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DELEGATES reciting the ACPAPP Pledge during the First Annual National Convention in Subic, Zambales.

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Philam Managed Income Fund, Inc.	3.08%*	n/a	n/a
Philam Fund, Inc.	36.90%	[illegible]	[illegible]
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GSIS Mutual Fund, Inc.	43.00%	[illegible]	n/a

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The ACPAPP Pledge

I shall conduct myself in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, fairness and competence, and adhere to the highest level of professional conduct.

I shall consistently and continuously adhere to the standards set by the Professional Code of Conduct for CPAs and maintain independence in judgment and action.

I shall comply fully and consistently with government laws and regulations and assume a proactive role in shaping government policies toward good governance.

I shall regard my colleagues as business peers deserving professional respect and utmost consideration.

I shall uphold my commitment to society especially in promoting honesty and fairness in the practice of my profession.

I shall adopt and observe the professional ethical standards in the delivery of services to my clients.

I shall protect the interest of and provide value to stakeholders of my clients.

I shall perform quality assurance and advisory work to promote transparency, accountability and full disclosure.

I shall observe and promote best corporate practices to the best interest of my clients and the general public.

I shall strive to provide superior value to my clients, uphold their interest equal to my own, and nurture long-term relationships with them.

I shall develop and maintain a roster of highly professional and capable manpower resource and provide a work environment that is conducive to the enhancement of work and increased well-being of employees.

I shall continually expand my knowledge and upgrade my skills and professional competence in order to give competent advice to the clients that I serve.